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Thirteen essays on the teaching of college English are included--(1) "Prospect" by John H. Fisher, (2) "The Study and Teaching of English" by William C. De Vane, (3) "Introductory Literature Courses" by Hoyt Trowbridge, (4) "General and Interdisciplinary Courses" by Robert C. Pooley, (5) "Freshman Composition" by Robert M. Gorrell, (6) "Advanced Composition" by Richard Lloyd-Jones, (7) "Courses in Creative Writing" by Richard Scowcroft, (8) "Courses in Language and Linguistics" by Albert H. Marckwardt, (9) "The Discipline of Literary Criticism" by Murray Krieger, Programs in English" by Roger P. McCutcheon, (12) "Articulation Between Programs in English " by Roger P. McCutcheon, (12)"Articulation Between High School and College English" by Donald J. Gray, and (13) "The Department of English: Organization and Administration" by Robert W. Rogers. Each author surveys the activities in his area and, in most cases, suggests needed reforms. (BN)

THE COLLEGE TEACHING OF ENGLISH

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The College Teaching of English

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Dedicated to

JAMES A. WORK

PREFACE

We here present a collection of essays on some of the most important aspects of the teaching of college English. The authors of these essays are qualified by dedication to teaching as well as by productive scholarship. All were asked to survey the activity in their areas and to suggest the crucial needs for the future. They were encouraged to affirm their convictions in their own way, and no attempt has been made to impose uniformity in either opinion or method. As a result, some have spoken from their own rich experience, others primarily from hours of research. Some urbanely survey the passing scene, some plead for reform, and still others demand it. On the fundamental point of faith in our profession, everyone is in agreement. No one has questioned whether the teaching in college of our language and literature is worth doing; the problem has been, how we can do it well.

Admittedly, these essays do not comprehend all possible aspects of teaching English in colleges and universities. We explored only incidentally such fields as American Civilization and Comparative Literature where English blends with other disciplines. Similarly, we gave only slight consideration to problems of teaching or methodology. Other topics have had formal treatment denied them on grounds of repetition. Such repetition in argument and recommendation as still remains we hope will not be unwelcome.

This book has been a long time on the way. Initially it was to have appeared prior to the recently published Volume V in the series of works on the teaching of English sponsored by the Curriculum Commission of the National Council of Teachers of English. Under this plan Professor Porter Perrin of the University of Washington collected descriptions of courses and curricula in English from colleges and universities throughout the country. Well into the enormous task of studying this material, Professor Perrin became ill and had to abandon the plan.

When in 1957 Professor James A. Work of Indiana University accepted the editorship, the project was expanded in both scope and sponsorship. Under his guidance the volume became a joint venture of the National Council of Teachers of English, the Modern Language Association, the American Studies Association, and the College English Association. Professor Work and representatives of these four organizations agreed that the book should not be simply a report on the more promising programs, as had been originally planned, but should be one which pointed beyond the best of today to the possibilities of tomorrow. With this new objective in mind, Professor Work selected his authors from lists prepared by the four organizations. Unhappily, writing on the several chapters had not been completed when the untimely death of Professor Work again brought activity to a stop. The present editors took over in 1961.

It would be impossible for us to name all those who in one way or another have contributed to the making of this volume. Among others the list would include the executive secretaries and members of the boards of the four sponsoring organizations; Professor Dora Smith, Professor Porter Perrin, and other members of the National Council's Curriculum Commission; and all of those who over the years have sent in descriptions of their courses and programs. Especially, however, we wish to thank those whose names appear in the table of contents. The authors of the various chapters have been more understanding and long-suffering than any group of writers should ever have to be. Still, our greatest debt is to Professor Work who planned this volume but did not live to see its completion. Without his wisdom, enthusiasm, and firm but friendly direction this book would not exist.

JCG
JHF
CAZ

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I

JOHN H. FISHER

Prospect

There are more than 1,500 college English departments in the United States, serving various regions and clienteles, each doing as well as it can with its resources. It is almost too much to hope that there can be observations and recommendations that will be relevant to all of them, public and private, lay and sectarian, large and small. But were there not objectives, procedures, and a body of knowledge common to all of them, there would be no such subject as English. The assumption that there is a common substance and a common concern underlies all of the essays in this volume.

What we call "English" in American education is shaped by our national history and is peculiar to our educational system. It has provided for us the sort of continuity with the tradition of European culture that Latin once provided for Europe itself. The very name "English" betrays its lineage: we are but three and a half centuries from Plymouth Rock and Jamestown, and for many years the language and literature of England represented the colonists' closest bond with the homeland. The writings of such authors as Shakespeare, Milton, and Tennyson long served as archetypes for literature in this country. Likewise, British linguistic prejudices of the eighteenth century led to the linguistic insecurity which still underlies the public demand that we teach "correct" usage. English departments have found themselves custodians of the doctrine of correctness in language and of the genteel tradition in literature. At the same time, English teachers have recognized their responsibility for exposing sham and banality and for creating respect for the truly perceptive and effective in language and literature. The tension between these sacerdotal and iconoclastic roles is very real. The explosion over *Webster's Third New International Dictionary* and the chronic impulse of the public to censor texts (which occasioned a National Council of Teachers of English pamphlet, *The Students' Right to Read)* shows how the public and even our colleagues in other departments expect us to uphold the sanctities of "correctness" and "culture." Not infrequently their views clash with our own.

It would be pleasant indeed to be sure where we stood in the matter of traditionalism versus modernity. The stance of the straddler is never comfortable; yet this is the stance in which we in English departments seem invariably to find ourselves. In dealing with language and literature, we appreciate that we are dealing with artifacts, with the memorials of another age. A sentence written down and yesterday's novel are as truly things of the past as Middle English and *The Canterbury Tales.* Yet although we are custodians of a great tradition, we cannot afford to lose touch with our culture, with the world in which our students must and should live. Curricula that devote inordinate attention to *Beowulf* and Carlyle at the expense of Emerson and Faulkner; curricula that provide seminars in Dryden and Pope but only general surveys in large classes for modern American literature; curricula that insist—if there are any that still do—upon nineteenth century, Arnoldian decorum in thought and expression—these, obviously, will not do. If we insist on clinging to such in the name of upholding standards, we shall find ourselves preachers without a congregation. Yet we are appalled by the number of students coming on to graduate school who appear never to have read anything earlier than 1900 and who write for us in the jargon of the sports page. Those, just as clearly, will not do. Exactly what is the right balance between the contemporary and the traditional, between the casual and the formal? These are some of the matters which the succeeding chapters on composition, linguistics, literary history, and criticism will attempt to assess.

But there is an even deeper cleavage in our profession than that between the modernists and the traditionalists, and that is the cleavage between those concerned primarily with English as a skill and those concerned mainly with the English language and literature in English as a content. The history that is important to an understanding of this cleavage is that of the growth of popular education in the United States. Until the First World War popular education was largely elementary, and high schools (so often private academies) were college preparatory. The growth in the high school population from under a million in 1910 to five and a half million in 1935 tells its own story. Between 1910 and 1935 the educational habits of our nation changed, as they did not throughout most of Europe. In this country it came to be assumed that all children would go on to high school. This assumption altered fundamentally the nature of the high school. From being principally a transitional, screening agency, designed to prepare a select group of students for college work, it became principally a terminal agency with its own *raison d'être*. The philosophy of the high school curriculum changed radically. Whereas the curriculum of the college preparatory academy had been dictated from above by the skills and knowledge needed for historical and theoretical study in college—languages, history, mathematics, and the beginnings of logic and science—the curriculum of the popular high school was to a great extent dictated from below by the need to enhance and apply the rudimentary skills taught in the elementary grades. Foreign languages tended to disappear; history, to become civics; arithmetic, to lead to bookkeeping; logic and science, to be transformed into shop and home economics. In the same way, the teaching of reading and writing in the elementary grades too often slipped off into the writing of "practical" prose and the reading of stories and essays for the purpose of improving one's skill rather than of gaining insights or developing taste.

The founding of the College Entrance Examination Board (1900) and of the National Council of Teachers of English (1911) was directly related to this evolution in the function of the high school. Until late in the nineteenth century, Latin had continued to be the language and literature central to college education. That being the case, preparation in Latin continued to be an essential function of the academy. This implied not only mastery of the language, but some introduction to the vast heritage of classical rhetorical and literary theory. When, as part of the general rejection of the purely classical education, literature in the modern vernaculars had begun to become a legitimate subject for serious study, the Modern Language Association was founded in America (1883) by scholars determined to make the study of English, French, and German quite as rigorous and intellectually respectable as the study of Latin and Greek. This they managed to do–all too successfully, some would say. By 1911, the MLA's view of English as an historical and intellectual discipline and body of knowledge was as foreign to the new mission of the high schools as the disciplines of pure mathematics or theoretical chemistry. The roots of MLA scholarship were in the Latin tradition of the medieval university, not in the teaching of reading and writing in the elementary school. Hence, the elementary school and high school English teachers in the new order, finding little to interest them in the philological and literary pursuits of the MLA, created their own organization to develop objectives and materials which would adapt "English" to its new "language arts" context. On the other hand, college English departments, along with the other traditional disciplines in college, continued to want from the high schools the same preparation in the college preparatory subjects that they had expected from the academies. Since the high schools could no longer provide adequate screening by shaping their curricula directly to the ends of the colleges, the College Entrance Examination Board was founded to select those students who conformed most nearly to the preparatory pattern that the colleges desired.

This history helps to explain the tensions among the NCTE, MLA, and CEEB, and between the "language arts" and "literature" in the 1930's. The College English Association was founded in 1939 by college English teachers who recognized that some compromise between these various positions was mandatory and who sought to strengthen the creative side of teaching and writing. But the tension continued until the end of the Second World War. Since that time there has been a considerable relaxation on both sides. The classical tradition has reasserted itself in the rhetorical analysis of the "new criticism" and the revival of interest in classical and medieval literature in translation. Over the past ten years, the programs and publications of the NCTE have grown much more sympathetic to, and sophisticated in, the literary aspects of English. Over the same period, especially in the Foreign Language Program, the programs and publications of the MLA have grown more cognizant of "communication." The CEA in the 1950's helped to interpret the humanities to business and science through its national conferences. The Commission on English of the CEEB has since 1960 through its publications and institutes sought to train teachers and produce materials that would serve the needs of communications and at the same time introduce students to the critical analysis of language and literature.

The difficulty of producing a sequential program in English from the elementary grades through college is that, in spite of the changes that popular education has wrought in the high school curriculum and freshman composition, the terminus, the ultimate objective of English both within the profession and in the eyes of the public, remains what it always has been—extensive and perceptive acquaintance with major literature. The only possible alternatives appear to be historical philology or the new science of linguistics. Yet until the history of the English language or linguistic analysis can produce methods and materials for handling large units of language—essays, plays, novels—and dealing with the relation between thought and language—emotion, perception, logic, rhetoric—they cannot offer as complete or satisfying materials for mature study as great literature, which affords the opportunity for linguistic, aesthetic, and intellectual exploration of so many different kinds.

A sequential curriculum of study demands an objective. In science the objective is the research physicist or the pure mathematician. The new programs that have been created in these areas are new partly in that from the beginning they stress the theoretical concepts of genetics, atomic structure, or set theory rather than focusing introductory mathematics on making change at the grocery store, and introductory science on why milk sours or why doorbells ring. Along the way, many students will end up making change and ringing doorbells, but these practical applications are not allowed to dominate and structure the new curricula. These new patterns have been accepted in science and mathematics because recent spectacular achievements in such areas as pharmacology, nuclear physics, and the programing of information have demonstrated the close relationship between pure research and practical application.

Viewed from the perspective of the first grade, making change seems much more relevant than calculus. Furthermore, from the perspective of the first grade, mathematics can lead to all sorts of practical and theoretical applications, in business, industry, architecture, science, and engineering. It is only by looking backwards, from the perspective of the pure mathematician, that the main thoroughfare can be distinguished from the byways. Hence it is that the new curricula in mathematics and science have been designed by the most eminent specialists who could be found.

Viewed from the perspective of the first grade, communication is the most relevant purpose for learning to read and write. Like adding and subtracting, learning to read and write serves many purposes in business and in all other activities. If these skills are viewed merely as handmaidens to other affairs, however, they soon lose any shape or entity of their own. This is what has happened to the language arts curriculum in general. It could be, and indeed has been, attached to social studies, journalism, and business English quite as readily as to literature. The philosophy of "communications" can dominate, and frequently has dominated, the English curriculum from the first grade through freshman composition. It may even go further in courses in advanced composition and report writing. But generally, after the freshman composition course, the student who pursues English turns to literary history and literary analysis, for which he may or may not have had any preparation in high school. Unless he has been an omnivorous reader on his own—as so many good students fortunately have been—the second year of college is almost too late for him to begin really to grasp the implications of literature.

Now, if we can agree that mastery of the kind of language used in our major literature is the mainstream of our English curriculum, the situation can be remedied. It is possible to design curricula in which early reading is chosen for the light it will cast on the later study of literature: the Cooperative English Program's "An Articulated English Program: A Hypothesis to Test," and Toronto's *Design for Learning* are examples. Jerome Bruner, in *The Process of Education*, seems to affirm that literary perception —recognition of tragedy, for example—is the ultimate goal of English. There are, admittedly, difficulties in integrating literature with composition and linguistics, as the CEEB institute programs have shown. The figure of a tripod of language, composition, and literature is admirable if the three come together at the top. But there is danger of ending up not with a tripod but with three parallel curricula—unless we can build composition and linguistics around a core of excellent reading.

A third cleavage must be mentioned, that between the study of English for its own sake and the preparation of others to teach it. This cleavage is related to, but not identical with, that between English as a skill and English as a body of knowledge. Teacher preparation has its own ironies. It is evident that the further down one goes, the more important educational psychology, psychometry, and special methods and materials become. To the graduate professor, it has seemed, knowledge of the subject is the essence, method of secondary importance. To the first grade teacher, knowledge of child development and method are the essence, knowledge of the subject of secondary importance, since the skills to be taught are themselves rudimentary. The elementary school teacher cannot understand why graduate professors are permitted to be as indifferent to their students' individual aptitudes and interests as they sometimes are, why they are allowed to ramble and mumble, give wildly subjective examinations (or none at all), and generally break all the commandments of good teaching. The answer is, of course, that at that level, grasp of the subject itself must count for everything, and the further out on the frontier of knowledge the scholar is, the less easily can he systematize his findings. An experiment of the morning, the latest scholarly article, may compel him to alter the direction of his teaching.

The scholar who is working constantly in new fields, never going over the same material twice, cannot understand why method is so important in the earlier years. With his self-selected and academically oriented students, he can have no conception of the enormous diversity of the students the public school teacher must deal with. With his conviction that it is in the final analysis up to the student himself to master the subject, he has little conception of a teaching situation in which failure of the student means failure by the teacher. Everyone normal enough to enroll in school should be able to learn to read and write. But here is a little boy or a little girl for whom it doesn't come clear. What may be the trouble—eyes, ears, parents? What new device can be used to make this student grasp what most of his fellows have grasped so easily?

The scholar and the elementary school teacher are both right in their own ways. But in the humanities—in English, especially —we have a shameful record of failure to understand, or even to try to understand each other at the two ends of the spectrum. Instead of finding sympathy and help, the elementary school teacher, and too often even the high school teacher, is barred from taking graduate courses in English. And if by any chance he gets in, he finds little that is relevant to his problems. Is it any wonder that a curriculum and a profession of English education have grown up to mediate between the scholar and the teacher? It is normal that some members of a department will be more interested in literary history, some in criticism, some in linguistics. Those who are interested in the teaching problems of the lower schools should have an equally honorable place in our departments.

For the gravest and most dangerous self-deception that we in college English have been guilty of is in regarding "research" as our true vocation and sloughing off teaching and the preparing of teachers as necessary evils. This self-deception is an inheritance from the German system upon which our graduate education is patterned. The German system of specialization was appropriate to research in science, and it produced, in science, a great efflorescence. What is not usually recognized is that it was never devised as a system of *education*, but rather as a system for *advancing knowledge*. It was perhaps better adapted to the independent institute than to the university. Its success was to be measured by the real knowledge it produced, in such fields as chemistry, physics, or astronomy. The seminars that were established on the same model to advance knowledge in languages and literature were expected to produce results just as tangible as the results of the scientific seminars. Hence languages and literature concentrated on philology (working with the real material of sounds and writing systems) and literary history (working with the real material of textual, biographical, and social data). The trouble is that while a hundred years of development of the team research, fact gathering, article publishing method have led to a staggering breakthrough in modern science, the same hundred years of experience have led to growing distrust of the German method in the humanities. Yet we have nothing really to substitute for this method. This is not the place to explore new directions for graduate study in the humanities. While we cast about for new ways to advance and measure the sort of study of language and literature we really believe in, we might as well admit that in American society, in American colleges and universities, the major business of departments of English and other departments in the humanities is education. We simply cannot justify our advanced study by its contribution to practical knowledge. How is the public—how are we ourselves—to weigh a cure for cancer against an edition of Emerson?

What has made the new critical approaches to literary study so vital and exciting over the last thirty years has been not their addition to knowledge but their contribution to *teaching*. The new criticism, with its emphasis upon form, structure, and meaning, is essentially a brilliant method of pedagogy. The title of Brooks and Warren's epoch-making volume (itself a textbook) is significantly *Understanding Poetry*. The whole trend towards analysis and explication is directed towards interpretation, towards literacy on the highest level. The scholars and critics most talked of today are not the literary detectives, paleographers, and historians but those who can cast most light on the creative process and on our response to the literary work. Such discussions are pedagogical in their orientation. In our turning away from the collection of facts for their own sake and towards the interpretation of literature, we have already gone far towards bringing teaching to the center of our interest.

The challenge before us is to adapt these new methods and approaches to literature to the needs and situations of elementary and secondary education. There is no question that criticism has more to offer to general and continuing education than has literary history. The most significant feature of the literature courses in the CEEB institutes was their effort to adapt critical interpretation to the high school level. One of our clearest professional goals in the period immediately ahead is that of developing materials (scholarly editions, interpretive biographies, critical discussions, or actual textbooks) to introduce every grade to reading and writing on the most sophisticated level possible.

As important as developing teaching materials is preparing our students to use them as teachers. Another of our peculiarities as a profession has been our indifference to those of our students who were preparing to be, like us, teachers. Science departments plan their curricula from the first day to train professional scientists. They make virtually no provision for the general student. Yet we appear deliberately to favor the general student over the professional. Certainly we must continue to provide courses for the prospective doctors and lawyers. But might it not be better to move them to the periphery and to move the prospective teachers to the center of our attention? We must make sure that the prospective teachers can themselves read and write with fluency and perception. But we must go beyond that. We cannot expect them alone to transmute college and graduate school critical approaches to something useful for younger students. Even less can we ask them alone and without help to make their appreciation of great literature relevant to the task of teaching young children—many of whom will never themselves progress beyond a rudimentary control of the language—to be as articulate as it is possible for them to become. Unless the *Odyssey* and *Hamlet* can be taught as expressions of the human spirit, they should probably not be taught at all. The problem is to discover at what ages such pieces can be introduced, what aspects of their expression children respond to most readily, what causes children most difficulty in grasping them, and how the passive study of another man's inspired statement can help the student express himself more adequately. These are as valid interests and objectives of an English department in an American college or university in the second half of the twentieth century as the finest scholarship and criticism.

We live in changing times. The maturing of our society, the scientific bent of contemporary thought, and the advent of mass education in college are producing changes in our public, in our students, and in ourselves. Language and literature may well be the most constant elements in a society; yet they are as various and mutable as life itself. "English" could not stand still, even if we wanted it to. Ours, then, is the age-old problem of any institution: that of trying to hold on to traditional values while adapting to a new situation.

2

WILLIAM C. DeVANE

The Study and Teaching of English

THE FULL DEVELOPMENT of the teaching and study of English in American colleges is a major event in education of the twentieth century. From a random study of a few major authors, both British and American, there has burgeoned within a few decades a full blown major in literature, complete with lectures, seminars, long essays, and comprehensive examinations. In all such major programs American literature is likely to be a significant part, though in a few large institutions it has become a separate and autonomous major. Many majors, too, have been broadened to include examples of foreign literatures, ancient and modern, for the sake of comparison. Perhaps an equally significant development is the inclusion of contemporary literature in its many forms.

The teaching and study of the English language have undergone comparable changes at the same time. The older study was primarily interested in tracing etymologies and observing the historical changes as the basic Anglo-Saxon speech was affected by Danish, Norman, Latin, Greek, and other influences. The grammar and structure of the language were studied also as extrapolations of the Latin pattern, which was regarded as universally applicable. The new fashion in the study of language is scientifically oriented and less historical; it deals with units of sound and is generally more interested in psychology and anthropology than in literature. Many new teachers of language have risen, sometimes forming independent departments to study linguistics, both comparatively and structurally. The earlier rhetoric, too, has developed in one direction into a sequential set of courses for teaching composition, expository and creative, and in another direction into subtle and new analyses of style. The study and teaching of speech, moreover, has not only greatly increased but has become more analytical and sophisticated. Criticism and theory, too, have become prominent features in the modern curriculum as the study of English has become more professional and more intellectual. With all these developments in the content of the English curriculum there have been comparable changes in the methods of instruction, as, for example, the old conception of recitation has given way to lecture, seminar, tutorial sessions, and independent work.

This expanded area of study is far more, of course, than a single teacher can master. At most he can be reasonably competent in only two or three phases of English. In the pages that follow I shall emphasize the aspect of literature in the study and teaching of the broad field, partly because that is the aspect that most of us operate in once we have graduated from freshman composition. I shall also do what I can to touch upon some of the other phases of the subject but can do so with considerably less assurance.

The evolution of English studies in this country during the last seventy-five years into its present professional status as a major aspect of the teaching and scholarship of all universities and colleges was a segment of a large international development. In imitation of continental European groups of learned associations for the interchange of opinion, the teachers of literature in America towards the turn of the century began to establish journals to record and disseminate the results of their studies. The Modern Language Association was first instituted in 1883 as a convention for the teachers of modern languages and literatures. In 1884 the direction of the society towards a greater interest in research was announced by the establishment of the association's journal, *Publications of the Modern Language Association*, and in 1886 *Modern Language Notes* was first published. *The Journal of English and Germanic Philology*, so significant in its title, followed in 1897, and *Modern Philology* began publication in 1903. These, of course, are only a few of the important professional journals that serve to disseminate the findings of scholars of English. A sequential reading of any one of these periodicals will disclose the changing climate of the English classrooms throughout this century, and it is now my purpose to attempt a survey of the ideas which have successively dominated the study and the teaching of English in our colleges.

The articles in the journals stress the progress of English teachers as they became members of a large and distinctive profession. These articles were frequently republished in books, and it is the important books which have given direction and method to our teaching.[1] Each of us who has lived long enough can recall a great teacher or a great book (the life-blood of a great master) that has changed the direction and quality of our thinking and of our lives. The oldest of us still teaching will remember the work of Kittredge, Tinker, Stoll, Manly, E. N. S. Thompson, Tucker Brooke, or Harper. Many middle-aged teachers will recall the impact of Lovejoy's *Great Chain of Being* or Beach's *Concept of Nature in Nineteenth Century Poetry*. For a somewhat younger group of teachers and scholars the work of I. A. Richards and John Crowe Ransom's *The New Criticism* were immensely influential. But this is to name only a few of the great books produced in America in this century.

Nothing ever starts in a vacuum, and it is certain that the study of English literature in this country did not. Before the huge tide of German-trained teachers reached America in the last decades of the nineteenth century, there existed a native tradition of belles lettres, best represented by Longfellow and Lowell, which sometimes produced excellent scholarship simply because the man practicing it was excellent himself. This tradition owed little to formal training in English and often demanded no special learning and was directed by no special doctrine. At its worst it was trivial and deficient in ideas and judgment, and it could be appallingly indiscriminate. At its best it had many intuitions and insights, and it loved the literature it spoke about. A belated, but excellent, product of this tradition in America was Henry Augustin Beers, who was a creator of literature as well as an influential teacher of it. Though not a specialist, he was immensely erudite. His fine humanism may be seen in two sensitive and intelligent books.[2] Throughout the country there were many others like him.

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[1] In the survey that follows I have been much aided by two essays: René Wellek, "Literary Scholarship," in Merle Curti, ed., *American Scholarship in the Twentieth Century*, 1953; and Douglas Bush, "Literary Scholarship and Criticism," *Liberal Education*, XLVIII (May, 1961), 207–228. For the opinions expressed here, however, the responsibility is my own.

Well before the beginning of the twentieth century, a very different kind of scholar and teacher had appeared. In 1857–1858 Francis Child published his monumental *Scottish and English Ballads,* a work which still may serve as a model of scholarship. But Child was a harbinger of the future. In the last two decades of the nineteenth century, the campuses of America began to feel in full force the effect of scholars and teachers trained in the German universities. Jena, Göttingen, Bonn, and above all Berlin had made Germany the intellectual leader of Europe; there the new learning in all its branches found its home. Young Americans, returning from their studies in Germany with a new vision, saw the land before them as offering an incredible opportunity for their cultivation. Equally important, they brought home improved methods in the lecture, the seminar, and the report to put their vision into operation. The new vision for English was, of course, philology—literature treated in the spirit of science, or "genetically," to show its sources, connections, and relationships.[3] The facts of literature, however trivial, and the biographies of its writers were of immense importance; fortunately, they had not been systematically collected before. Texts and reliable editions needed to be published. Bibliographies were needed. Early English literature was a favorite field for work, perhaps because the German universities had cultivated it. Immense numbers of factual articles were published in the journals along with innumerable small books. This work was often pedantic, but sometimes it was solid and useful, and such work leaves us in the debt of the scholar who produced it. A characteristic project of this kind of study, though atypically huge, was the plan of Horace H. Furness and his co-workers in *The New Variorum Shakespeare.*[4] In general, the early practitioners of philology were notably shy of aesthetic and critical judgments. They could tell their students everything about a poem except why it was poetry. They thought the study of English required rigor, as indeed it did, so they smothered the study under language requirements, such as Gothic, Old French, and Norse. The chief objection to the monopoly which such philology imposed upon the study of English was that the student's mind and spirit were given little opportunity to ripen into wisdom.

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[2] Beers' volumes on the Romantic poets are still profitable and enjoyable reading. They are *A History of Romanticism in the Eighteenth Century,* 1899, and *A History of Romanticism in the Nineteenth Century,* 1901. But see also his pioneering work in American literature as well.

[3] The ideal, a general history of culture, was a noble one and was well expressed in Albert Stanburrough Cook, *The Higher Study of English* (1908). His practice and that of most of the adherents of this ideal in the early days unfortunately fell short of the ideal.

Philological and "genetic" study of literature have not ceased, of course, as other approaches to literature have evolved. But such studies have matured and become sophisticated as the older philologists, such as Cook and Kittredge, gave way to younger scholars and teachers, such as Manly and Rickert, Willard Farnham, Howard Jones, William R. Parker, George Sherburn, and Emery Neff, several of whom were practitioners in other traditions as well.[5] Perhaps most germinal were such studies as

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[4] A few examples of early excellent work in this kind of scholarship may be cited here: C. F. Tucker Brooke, *The Shakespeare Apocrypha,* 1908, and *The Works of Christopher Marlowe,* 1910; G. L. Kittredge, *A Study of Gawain and the Green Knight,* 1916; George P. Krapp and E. v.K. Dobbie, *The Anglo-Saxon Poetic Records,* 1930 ff.; Lily Campbell, *Mirror for Magistrates,* 1938; Thomas W. Baldwin, *Organization and Personnel of the Shakespearean Company,* 1927; James D. Bruce, *The Evolution of the Arthurian Romance,* 1923; Roger S. Loomis, *Celtic Myth and Arthurian Romance,* 1943; Raymond D. Havens, *The Influence of Milton in English Poetry,* 1922; and George McLean Harper, *William Wordsworth: His Life, Works and Influence,* 1916.

[5] The varied titles of the influential volumes of these younger scholars, cited respectively, are significant: *The Text of the Canterbury Tales,* 1940; *The Medieval Heritage of Elizabethan Tragedy,* 1936; *American and French Culture,* 1927; *Milton's Debt to Greek Tragedy in Samson Agonistes,* 1937; *The Early Career of Alexander Pope,* 1934; and *Carlyle and Mill,* 1924. But this is to mention only a few.

Chauncey Tinker's *The Young Boswell*, 1922, and John Livingston Lowes' *The Road to Xanadu*, 1927. A more ambitious professionalism, too, may be seen in the handbooks devoted to major authors.[6] But the most visible development of philological scholarship in our later time may be seen in huge editing tasks, often undertaken cooperatively, of the works of Spenser, Milton, Shakespeare, Boswell, and Walpole.[7] This work is of the highest competence. In this kind we have not only outdistanced Germany, from whence the initial impetus came, but we have outstripped Britain as well. Until very recently philological scholarship of this nature has been America's most characteristic output in the study of literature and has often been indiscriminate enough. Inevitably, the champion discoverer of new biographical facts has been an American, Leslie Hotson. Bred in this scholarship, the older teachers demanded facts and relationships of their students and sometimes expected little else.

Existing at the same time as the early Germanic philological study was the native tradition of belles lettres which I have referred to above; this older tradition was in violent reaction against the more professional kind of study. In the early years of the present century, every college had one enthusiastic appreciator of literature who made friends for culture in great quantity. At Harvard it was Bliss Perry; at Yale it was William Lyon Phelps. Scattered over the campuses of the country such men were too individualistic to be like each other, but they were all representatives of a popular cultural condition. They harked back to an earlier humane tradition but in their enthusiasm were often appallingly indiscriminate. Sometimes they were more adventurous than their philological colleagues and in their enthusiasm were pioneers, as was Phelps in introducing the study of the Russian novelists to America. They had few critical standards and made their more austere colleagues feel ungenerous and unappreciative of literature. They would gladly teach without remembering the other delight which Chaucer ascribed to the Clerk of Oxford. The enthusiast was probably as inevitable a phenomenon at that time as the entrepreneur in the history of American culture; at any rate, he hustled in his time and got results—of an evanescent sort. He had a huge undergraduate following but now has almost disappeared from the academic scene when a little of his excitement about literature might be useful to a profession which has become intensely analytical and critical and which is inclined to pay more attention to techniques than content.

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[6] One thinks of such useful handbooks as the following: R. D. French, *Chaucer*, 1927; H. S. V. Jones, *Spenser*, 1930; J. H. Hanford, *Milton*, 1926 and 1948; and DeVane, *Browning*, 1935 and 1955.

[7] The great editions that come to mind are such as the following: Edwin Greenlaw, Charles G. Osgood, Frederick Padelford, *et al.*, *Spenser's Works* in 10 volumes, 1932–1949; Frank A. Patterson, *et al.*, *Works of John Milton* in 18 volumes, 1931–1938; Frederick A. Pottle, *et al.*, *The Private Papers of James Boswell*, 1928–; and Wilmarth S. Lewis, *et al.*, *Horace Walpole's Correspondence*, 1937–.

Like a wave in midocean, the enthusiastic teacher has vanished, leaving only a warm memory behind in the hearts of those of his erstwhile pupils who are still alive. But soon a more intellectual rebellion rose against both the philologist and the enthusiast. Disciples for the most part of Matthew Arnold, the leaders of the new movement were the New Humanists, led by Irving Babbitt at Harvard and Paul Elmer More at Princeton. The temper of these men was classical; for their standards of judgment they referred to classical authors and ideals. They strove to introduce a moralistic element into the study of literature—an austere ethical rationalism. They were too conservative, too abstract in their thinking, and too aristocratic to be widely popular, even among college professors, but their influence was profound in special places. T. S. Eliot was trained in this school and, until he found it too pagan for his religious convictions, thought well of it. Babbitt set up his ideal of criticism through his teaching and his influential books: *Literature and the American College* in 1908; *Masters of Modern French Criticism* in 1912; and *Rousseau and Romanticism* in 1919. Throughout he spoke for reason and proportion, and against the irrationality and indulgence of Romanticism, and by implication against the excesses of his own day. Paul Elmer More in his *Shelburne Essays* was perhaps less influential in promoting the same causes. For a while Stuart Sherman of Illinois was inclined towards this group, but he abandoned it for more lucrative pursuits. In 1929 Norman Foerster joined the group, belatedly but strongly, with his book, *The American Scholar*. With all their serious purpose and critical acumen, these men were less catholic in their taste than they might have been. In general they were hostile to contemporary art. After 1930 the movement began to die away, but its ideas had penetrated deeply into the minds of a number of important literary people, and its coloration of standards may still be occasionally seen.

In the hard years of the Great Depression of the 1930's, great concern about the social situation was inevitable. Granville Hicks showed this interest in the Marxist approach of his volume, *Figures of Transition*, 1939. Hicks dealt with such early socialists as William Morris and stressed the familiar doctrine of economic determinism. There was little learning in his criticism and not as much boldness as one might have expected. The Marxist view, indeed, had very little effect in the classroom, either then or later, though it produced a literature of modest proportions for the public. A considerably more influential body of opinion, much more enamoured of Jeffersonian democracy than Marxism, was to be found in Vernon Parrington's *Main Currents of American Thought*, 1927–1930. So interested in political and social history was Parrington that one may say that his interest was not primarily literary at all; as times improved, the scholars and teachers of American literature have neglected him. Social and political concerns, however, were here to stay and appear in the works of critics, devoted neither to Marxism nor Jeffersonianism as, for example, in Edmund Wilson's *Axel's Castle*, 1931, and Lionel Trilling's fine study, *Matthew Arnold*, 1939. Social and political concerns since the 1930's have added useful dimensions to literary study.

In the same decade a movement more significant for literary studies began to flourish in America, though its origins in Europe were much earlier. This was the History of Ideas. As early as 1922 Chauncey Brewster Tinker had developed the idea of primitivism in the eighteenth century in his small book, *Nature's Simple Plan*; this was followed by Hoxie Fairchild's *The Noble Savage* in 1928, and Lois Whitney's *Primitivism and the Idea of Progress* in 1934. Louis Brevold's *The Intellectual Milieu of*

John Dryden was also a product of that year. The movement was launched in strength, however, by Arthur O. Lovejoy's *The Great Chain of Being* in 1936. In that same year there appeared an astonishing group of important books dealing with the history of ideas: Joseph W. Beach, *Concept of Nature in Nineteenth Century Poetry*; Richard F. Jones, *Ancients and Moderns*; Hardin Craig, *The Enchanted Glass: The Elizabethan Mind in Literature*; and Helen White, *Metaphysical Poets: A Study of Religious Experience*. In 1939 Perry Miller's *The New England Mind* appeared, and in 1946 Marjorie Nicolson's *Newton Demands the Muse*. These, and other volumes like them, announced the full maturity of American scholarship. At its best, the history of ideas, as a movement, has been of tremendous use as an aid in interpreting literature and continues to be very attractive to American teachers and scholars.

On the positive side, the history of ideas requires reach and erudition of its practitioners, as well as subtlety in detecting relationships. Because its ramifications are wide, the scholar has to know a vast range of literature, as well as the history of religion and science, political and social history, and indeed all the phases of intellectual and cultural history. A particularly successful example of this exacting study is Douglas Bush's tracing of classical legend through English poetry, an example which is the better for being sharply critical, widely learned, and beautifully written. The shortcomings of this kind of study for literature may be seen in Lovejoy himself. By profession he was a philosopher and inclined to denigrate ideas in literature. Tested by his rigorous analysis, they proved gelatinous at best. To him poetry was merely document, and he showed little sympathy for works of imagination. Perhaps the greatest deficiency in such study as the history of ideas is that it demands no judgment of values. A poor poem may be of equal or even of more value as a historical document than a great one: Erasmus Darwin's "Loves of the Triangles" may be more important than Wordsworth's "Intimations of Immortality."

Since the Second World War, the dominant movement in the teaching and scholarship of English and American literature in this country has been the New Criticism. The name came from

John Crowe Ransom's book of that title published in 1941. Its origin, however, was in I. A. Richards' two books, *Principles of Literary Criticism*, 1924, and *Practical Criticism*, 1929. Ransom's book discussed the major practitioners of the method—Richards, T. S. Eliot, and Yvor Winters. The term, New Critic, is now applied to any critic roughly in the tradition established by Richards; this makes for a very diverse group. In America the term covers critics as different as Ransom, Cleanth Brooks, R. P. Blackmur, Kenneth Burke, and F. O. Matthiessen, and abroad such critics as Eliot and William Empson, an early disciple of Richards. The most important figures in this movement in the American scene after Ransom are Cleanth Brooks whose *Modern Poetry and the Tradition* was published in 1939, and whose *Well Wrought Urn: Studies in the Structure of Poetry* appeared in 1947; F. O. Matthiessen, whose several volumes on American writers stress a study of the imagery, texture, and symbolism of literature,[8] and Robert Penn Warren and Harry Levin with their studies of Coleridge and Joyce. It is probable that Brooks and Warren's textbook, *Understanding Poetry*, has been a more effective disseminater of the ideas and methods of the New Critics than any other work. At any rate, Cleanth Brooks' statement of 1943 that the New Critics "have next to no influence in the universities"[9] has not been valid for many years. Every department of English in the country had its corps of young New Critics, and the method has become pervasive in the work and teaching of older men. In spite of the name, the method is actually an old one whose novelty lies only in its emphatic reinstatement in this country in America. Significantly, though the contemporary movement originated in England, it has flourished most vigorously in the United States.

[8] This may be seen in F. O. Matthiessen, *The Achievement of T. S. Eliot: An Essay on the Nature of Poetry*, 1947; and *The American Renaissance: Art and Expression in the Age of Emerson and Whitman*, 1941. The preoccupation with imagery may also be seen in Robert Heilman, *This Great Stage*, 1948; Austin Warren, *Richard Crashaw: A Study in Baroque Sensibility*, 1939; and Mark Schorer, *William Blake*, 1949; and in Rosemond Tuve, *Elizabethan and Metaphysical Imagery*, 1947. But this is to name only a few of a great host, and one remembers also Allen Tate, Richard Blackmur, Josephine Miles, and others.

[9] *Sewanee Review*, LI (1943), 59.

The New Criticism was in strong reaction against virtually all former methods employed in the study of literature in this country: the easy, impressionistic reading habits of the enthusiasts; philology and literary history; social interpretations of literature; and the moralistic principles of the New Humanists. The New Critics had one tenet in common: they insisted upon a close scrutiny of the individual work of art itself. They concentrated upon the actual text of the work they were inspecting, analyzing its diction, its texture, its images, symbols, rhythm, and structure to find out the secret of its effectiveness and to appraise its value. They looked for the unity of a poem, its coherence and maturity as a work of art. They strove, not altogether successfully sometimes, to isolate the poem from all kinds of "extraneous" considerations—its background in history, biography, the literary tradition, and its ideas or ethics. They were not art for art's sake aesthetes but were often interested in social conditions or politics, religion, or psychoanalysis. But above all they were interested in the aesthetic fact and were absorbed in the study of ambiguities, paradoxes, ironies, images, and other poetic devices. The movement has had an immense influence and has, indeed, revolutionized the teaching of English and American literature in our colleges.

The practitioners of the New Criticism are so diverse that it is somewhat difficult to appraise the movement for its virtues and deficiencies. Some of the virtues are immediately apparent. First, the movement drove a generation of impressionistic readers back to close analysis of the text. Next, the New Critics were primarily concerned with problems of literary value, a concern which the philologists, the historians of ideas, and the social critics seldom expressed. The New Critics were young men in contact with the active world who saw the problems of life directly and not as abstract ideas. Their best expression was, therefore, without the jargon or the self-conscious intellectualism which subsequently appeared. Many of them were poets themselves and knew the art of poetry intimately. For these reasons and for its solid critical achievement, the movement has been good for the study of literature. Above all, it has driven many a ten o'clock scholar to read the text with care and to bring his whole mind, his knowledge, and his imagination to the task. And the evidence is that the students, too, have enjoyed it.

The shortcomings of the New Criticism are as obvious as its achievements. In the zeal of their rebellion, the New Critics were neglectful, and often scornful, of such knowledge as historical method and other kinds of learning sometimes shed upon a poem. Only internal evidence drawn from the poem itself was admissible. Possibly this is an unconscious reason why the New Critics like to deal with poems of our own time; the background of the poem and often the biography of the author were at hand without having to resort to the library. This is an unfair comment, and it would be more generous to say that the New Criticism encouraged strongly the study of contemporary poetry, a very salutary tendency. A more serious charge may be made against the movement: a lack of catholicity, or even generosity, in the taste of the New Critics. The literature they favor is naturally that which best exhibits their principles—the short poems of the seventeenth century and modern poetry. But that is to leave untreated enormous areas of British and American literature. It is noticeable that the methods of the New Critics are less successful with long poems, the drama, and the novel. Further, as the movement matured, the fact that each of the critics tended to develop a special vocabulary of his own has hardly helped win more readers to poetry—or to its criticism. A final observation applies to the latest movement in the study of literature (discussed briefly below) as well as to the New Critics: the less wise of them become so hypnotized by such devices as imagery, symbol, irony, and ambiguity that other important aspects of literature go unobserved.

This is a long bill of particulars, but it needs to be emphasized that for all its faults the New Criticism has been good for the study of English in colleges and universities. Time and custom will correct its errors. The movement appears at its best when it operates as a partner with other kinds of scholarship as it does, for example, in Louis L. Martz's *Poetry of Meditation*, 1959, M. H. Abrams' *The Mirror and the Lamp*, 1953, or Walter J. Bate's *The Stylistic Development of Keats*, 1945.

Of late, another very old interest in literary study has been revived in a new form. This is the search for the archetypal myth or symbol. The origin of the new movement may be traced to Carl Jung's idea of the "collective unconscious," fully developed in *The Psychology of the Unconscious* in 1912. In archetypes of legends current in all parts of the world, one sees form, pattern, and recurrent modes of viewing reality. The literary phase of this kind of study of English began in Maud Bodkin's *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry*, 1934. It has been greatly stimulated by the brilliant discussion in Northrop Frye's *Anatomy of Criticism*, 1957. This development is illuminating; one may see such universal symbols in poetry as day and night, spring and autumn, death and rebirth, the garden of innocence and experience, and such huge figures of Greek legend as Prometheus and Odysseus, and their modern counterparts, Faust and Joyce's Bloom. The problem, not always avoided, is to refrain from seeing such symbols everywhere. As Douglas Bush says wittily in speaking of the effect of modern psychology upon our literary critics:

> Some ideas, such as frustration, become master-keys for opening all doors. A crowd of authors and characters were seen trudging along the road back to the womb. Along a parallel road stumbled another crowd driven by the death-wish. Since *Moby Dick* has been a special target for critical theories, one might add the suggestion that the white whale represents the Spirit of Literature turning and reviling one-legged critics.

In judicious hands the search for archetypal symbols may be interesting and illuminating. A deficiency in the study is that again it requires no system of values in the critic and does not itself offer any criteria of value.

As the study and teaching of English progressed in the twentieth century, other old aspects of the field took on new guises. Bibliography, for example, taking off from Greg and McKerrow, began to employ scientific and other techniques unknown to the nineteenth century. Perhaps more interesting, and equally illustrative of a new analytical age, the theory and the history of criticism has engaged the minds of a considerable number of able scholars and teachers. This revived interest owes a good deal, no doubt, to the philosopher Croce, but perhaps even more to the critical writings of T. E. Hulme, Ezra Pound, and T. S. Eliot. In this kind are Herbert Muller's *Science and Criticism*, 1943; Howard Jones' *Theory of American Literature*, 1948; René Wellek and Austin Warren's *Theory of Literature*, 1949; Harry Levin's *Contexts of Criticism*, 1957; William Wimsatt and Cleanth Brooks' *Literary Criticism: A Short History*, 1957; and Wellek's comprehensive *History of Criticism*, planned as a work of four volumes, the first two of which appeared in 1955.

Especially subtle and valuable are a number of volumes where a full knowledge of the history of criticism is applied to the study of style in an age or a single author. As samples, one may mention William Wimsatt's *Prose Style of Samuel Johnson*, 1941; Josephine Miles' *Wordsworth and the Vocabulary of Emotion*, 1942; Mark Schorer's *William Blake, The Politics of Vision*, 1946; and Walter J. Bate's *From Classic to Romantic: Premises of Taste in Eighteenth Century England*, 1946. The earlier work of Morris Croll and Harry Clemons upon John Lyly's *Euphues* was a harbinger of these later studies, as was also Joseph Warren Beach's *The Method of Henry James*, 1918, not to mention James' own critical prefaces.

The understanding of modern linguistics would, without question, be of much use to the study of style, but unfortunately an invisible wall has been built between structural linguistics, the new development in this field, and the study of literature. Each group of teachers has neglected the other. The older students of languages are still concerned with historical grammar, and the new ones are engrossed with the technicalities of phonemics based on behavioristic philosophy and psychology. There has been some effort to bring about communications between the linguists and the language teachers, but no great progress has been made. An interesting comment and a few bold suggestions have been made by Robert P. Stockwell in an ACLS *Newsletter* (XIII, 8; December, 1962), but with the revolutionary condition of linguistics at the present time and the unwillingness of teachers of literature to master the alien techniques, there can be little hope for quick improvement.

The old study of rhetoric, as we have seen, has developed in one direction into the subtle analysis of style. In the opposite direction it has taken a turn for the worse and has developed into freshman composition. Until the high schools of the country can do a better job in training students to write, the younger years of our teachers will have to be spent in this subcollegiate task. Faithful and devoted teachers have brought much skill and ingenuity to the task, but until the other disciplines insist upon good performance in writing from their students also not a great deal will be accomplished. Advanced exposition and creative writing in the later years of college have been more successful, partly because the students have elected these courses and are better motivated, but partly also because some gifted and experienced teachers have been happy to devote themselves to this kind of teaching. Textbooks on composition are innumerable, but perhaps the most interesting of them is the recent edition of William Strunk's little handbook, *The Elements of Style, With Revisions, an Introduction, and a New Chapter on Writing* by E. B. White, 1959.

Here, then, is a rough sketch of the main ideas and activities which have influenced the study of British and American literature in this century.[10] We may say at once that the study of literature is not an exact science, and we hope it never will be. In it a new movement does not destroy an old one. Each mode of study has its value, and all of them are useful in varying degrees and for different purposes. The wise teacher will be eclectic and use whatever methods are at hand to interpret the literature and perform the tasks before him. No method has all the answers. We must be grateful to the philologist who has provided, and still provides, us with the bibliographies, the biographies, the editions as tools to work with; we owe the historians of ideas a debt for

[10] Men are more important than the movements which they create or participate in, and I am keenly conscious that I have not done full justice to the work of many men who have been extremely influential in shaping the ideas of their colleagues in the broad field of English literature and language. Justice has surely not been done to such moulders of opinion as Stoll, Baldwin Maxwell, Lily Campbell, Alfred Harbage, Karl Young, and E. N. S. Thompson, in their studies of the drama, nor to such important leaders of opinion as Merritt Y. Hughes for his work on Milton, Ricardo Quintana for his studies of Swift, or Bertrand Bronson for his work on the ballad; nor to such significant teachers as Lane Cooper, Robert Morse Lovett, Mark Van Doren, and Maynard Mack; nor, indeed, to a host of younger teachers and scholars who are just now assuming great place in the hierarchy of teachers of English.

their gift of perspective and their reminder of continuity; we must be grateful to the critics, new and old, for their achievements in sending us back to the text, and, above all, for their insistence that we employ criteria of value in judging the text. Because all our study of literature is for the purpose of interpreting and judging it, the more knowledge and better methods we bring to the task the better our appraisals are likely to be. All our study of language is to understand a human activity, to win clarity and logic for ourselves, and to refine our taste.

At this point a plea and a warning seem to me to be in order. The plea is that we exercise more tolerance for the methods which are other than those we may favor, without, of course, lowering our standards. The warning is that there is a danger in our professional sophistication. In the intense intellectualization of our study, we are prone to overemphasize technique and to forget in our analyses that literature is for our delight, to increase our wisdom, to sustain our spirits, and to sharpen our ethical sensitivity.

3

HOYT TROWBRIDGE

Introductory Literature Courses

I

LITERATURE IN ENGLISH, as in other modern languages, is a comparative newcomer to the college curriculum, but literature has been taught in the vernacular from the beginnings of Western civilization. Poetry and mathematics were the basic elements in Greek liberal education, and to the monolingual Hellenes, poetry could only mean the epic, dramatic, lyric, and didactic writings in their own tongue. Upper class Romans learned Greek and studied Greek literature, but Latin writers were always studied in the Roman schools. In the Middle Ages the trivium and quadrivium preserved the structure and content of the "grammatical" and "musical" part of the Greek curriculum, in both of which literature was central; the language, of course, was neither Greek nor the vernaculars of medieval Europe, but Latin. The long dominance of classical literature was finally broken in the nineteenth century. Much was lost in the upheaval of the old curriculum, as in other revolutions of that shattering age, but it opened the door to the teaching of all the world's literatures—ancient and modern, foreign and native. For us, as for the Greeks, no literature can have more relevance, importance, or educational value than that of our own tongue.

Although literature has been continuously taught from the earliest times, the use made of it has varied greatly. The subject has infinite variety. It can be studied and taught stylistically, linguistically, historically, biographically, philosophically, aesthetically, nationally, morally, and in many other ways. Today and in the past, the teaching of literature has been chiefly influenced by two determinants: the philosophy of education accepted by a particular period, country, school, or teacher; and the current state of literary scholarship as a technical discipline, a branch of liberal knowledge almost as old as literature itself.

The importance of the first determinant is dramatically illustrated in the three volumes of Jaeger's philosophical history of Greek education, *Paideia*.[1] Such a story could only be told philosophically, Jaeger believed, because the aim of teaching is to shape human beings toward a desired form, guiding growth under some controlling conception of human nature. Every system of education is rooted, implicitly or explicitly, in a theory of man; each school of philosophy has its own *paideia*, reflecting its particular ideal of culture and humanity. Though they usually taught the same subjects, including poetry, the different schools presented that and other subjects with different purposes in mind and, consequently, in widely varying ways.

Literature is teachable because it has been the object of rational inquiry, because knowledge of it has been accumulated and systematically organized. In ancient times the earliest efforts of literary scholarship were directed toward the establishment of authoritative texts of the Homeric epics. In later ages Hellenistic and Roman scholars gradually built up an elaborate structure of glosses and scholia, compilations of linguistic, historical, and biographical information, schemes of grammatical forms and rhetorical devices, classifications of tropes and arguments, systems of versification, and other results of scholarly investigation. These studies were undoubtedly undertaken for many reasons, including a desire to advance knowledge or to improve the arts of speaking and writing as well as to serve education generally. But parts of this body of learning were taught in the schools, and they had great influence on educational practice.

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[1] Werner Jaeger, *Paideia* (New York, 1933–1944).

The scholarly basis for the teaching of English literature, as René Wellek has shown, was laid in seventeenth century studies of Anglo-Saxon language and writings and especially in eighteenth century work on medieval romances, the ballads, and Elizabethan poets and playwrights.[2] The first full-scale chronological survey was Thomas Warton's *History of English Poetry*, 1774–1781, but the scholarly masterpiece of the period was Dr. Johnson's great edition of Shakespeare, 1765. The main elements of a scholarly edition, in a tradition as old as the Alexandrian scholiasts, were a critical text and explanatory glosses. Johnson, both scholar and man of letters, followed the example of Dryden and Pope in adding one modern element to the traditional materials, a prefatory essay of critical appraisal. Not much more than a hundred years later, literary scholarship in the modern vernaculars had become a fully developed institution, with its professional associations, its scholarly presses and periodicals, and had produced not only standard editions of all the major writers of earlier periods but many biographies and histories, anthologies like Palgrave's *Golden Treasury*, 1861, critical and interpretive works, encyclopedias, concordances, and other reference tools—in all, a body of learning almost as complete and well organized as the accumulated achievements of classical scholarship.

The origins of instruction in English literature are obscure, and standard histories of the American college curriculum do not clearly or fully reconstruct them.[3] The groundwork seems to have been laid by undergraduate literary and debating societies, founded in the eighteenth century. These clubs offered facilities outside the regular curriculum for reading, discussing, and writing about English poets and novelists; their libraries were often larger than those of the colleges themselves in the years before the Civil War.[4]

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[2] René Wellek, *The Rise of English Literary History* (Chapel Hill, 1941); see also Wellek, *A History of Modern Criticism: 1750–1950* Vol. I (New Haven, 1955), and Earl R. Wasserman, *Elizabethan Poetry in the Eighteenth Century* (Urbana, 1947).

[3] For example, L. F. Snow, *The College Curriculum in the United States* (New York, 1907), and R. Freeman Butts, *The College Charts Its Course* (New York, 1939). See also Donald A. Sears, *The Discipline of English* (New York, 1963), chs. I, II.

Formal instruction in English literature apparently began under the capacious umbrella of rhetoric and belles lettres. As early as 1794, the professor of rhetoric at Columbia (who was also the president, the American Dr. Samuel Johnson) was concerned not only with the art of speaking and writing in English but also with "the principles of true taste and the rules of just criticism, whereby the students may be enabled to judge properly of each species of composition in every branch of elegant literature." In 1810 the course of study at Columbia included "Illustrations from the best poets and prose writers" in the third year and "Criticism of approved writers" in the fourth.[5] Charles Haddock, a graduate of Dartmouth in the class of 1816, taught rhetoric there from 1819 to 1838, when his title was changed to Professor of Intellectual Philosophy and English Literature. The Dartmouth catalog issued in September, 1838, lists a course for the junior year, "Critical examinations of portions of English authors in prose and poetry," and two senior courses, "Dramatic art and literature" and "General principles of literary criticism."[6]

As their titles clearly imply, these courses must have been strongly influenced by British rhetorical theory, as presented in such widely read books as Blair's *Lectures on Rhetoric and Belles Lettres*, 1783, and Kames's *Elements of Criticism*, 1762. These works, eighteenth century equivalents of Quintilian's *Institutes of Rhetoric*, embodied not only new critical systems but also a new *paideia*. Both were derived ultimately from Locke and the British empirical tradition in philosophy. The courses based upon these theories, though novel in content, were part of the classical-mathematical curriculum prescribed for all students.

The great watershed in American higher education was the establishment of the elective principle in the years following the Civil War. The revolutionary consequences of this concept were particularly evident at Harvard, where not only the curriculum but the whole character of the institution was transformed during the long presidency of Charles W. Eliot (1869–1909). In his inaugural address Eliot stated a program of reform, which he and other leaders of the movement reiterated in innumerable essays and addresses.[7]

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[4] Frederick Rudolph, *The American College and University* (New York, 1962), ch. 7.

[5] J. H. Amringe *et al.*, *A History of Columbia University, 1754–1904* (New York, 1904), pp. 77, 91.

[6] I am indebted for this information to Professor William Crawford of the Dartmouth Department of English and Mr. Kenneth C. Cramer of the Baker Library staff.

The most obvious reason for attacking the traditional curriculum was a desire to free the student to follow the bent of his particular talents and interests, and to make him responsible for his own educational progress and achievement. The idea reflected a democratic and individualistic philosophy of education. Perhaps even more important, however, was Eliot's belief that teaching in American colleges had failed to keep pace with the advances of modern scholarship. The new learning which had come to maturity in Europe, especially in Germany, had opened many new fields of knowledge, humanistic as well as scientific, and had set new standards of scholarly rigor. In the light of these developments, the existing course of study in American colleges seemed both narrow and superficial; the rigid pattern of the prescribed curriculum made it almost impossible to introduce new disciplines, including the "modern humanities" and the emergent social sciences, and the level of instruction was too often elementary and amateurish. The essence of Eliot's program, in which the elective principle was an instrument rather than the ultimate end, was the same vision that inspired the foundation of Johns Hopkins under Daniel Coit Gilman in 1875 and of Chicago under William Rainey Harper in 1893. Eliot wanted to transform Harvard College into Harvard University, an educational institution offering advanced as well as undergraduate instruction, committed equally to research and to teaching, and animated throughout by the scientific spirit.

As one of the modern humanities, English literary study was among the chief beneficiaries of the new dispensation; Eliot himself proclaimed it as "the first subject entitled to recognition as of equal academic value or rank with any subject now most honored."[8] The early volumes of *PMLA*, beginning with 1884, give a vivid impression of the new state of affairs. There are a few complaints that some colleges are still reluctant to recognize the importance of modern literary studies, but the contributors write with the fervor and hopeful confidence of pioneers. Although several of them held academic titles including the words "and Rhetoric" or "Rhetoric and," they seem to have been anxious to dissociate their subject from that tradition, which they describe as "little more than verbal jugglery" and "productive of very little fruit."[9] Their *paideia* was not radically different from that of the eighteenth century rhetoricians, since their educational purpose was "the culture of the taste and the refining influence of literary knowledge,"[10] but they believed that literary culture should be scholarly. College teaching of literature should be grounded on thorough knowledge of the origins and growth of the language and should center on historical development, "the great movement of English life and feeling, as it is reflected in the *purest* poetry and the *purest* prose of representative men, those men who have led their people's sympathies." The method of instruction was philological and historical, but the final aim was "interpretation of the thoughts of the author and the truths he presents."[11]

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[7] Charles W. Eliot, *Educational Reform* (New York, 1898), pp. 1–38.

The somewhat scattered thoughts of these early essays were eloquently synthesized by A. S. Cook of Yale in his presidential address at the annual meeting of the Modern Language Association in 1897. A year earlier Woodrow Wilson had published an essay with the significant title, "Mere Literature," an attack on "the scientific and positivistic spirit of the age," which in his opinion had permeated literary scholarship and teaching. In the name of philological science, according to Wilson, taste and insight had been sacrificed to counting and measuring, to concentration on "matters which dull men can investigate, . . . tasks which mere plodding diligence and submissive patience can compass." Cook agreed that taste and insight are the aims of literary instruction, but he argued that they can be attained only by moving gradually from the phenomenal to the noumenal—from language and history to the things of the spirit. The preliminaries may seem laborious and even distasteful, but the guiding purpose is to recapture the inner life of the past:

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[8] Eliot, "What Is a Liberal Education?" in *ibid.*, p. 97. The essay was first delivered as a lecture at Johns Hopkins in 1884.

[9] J. M. Hart, "The College Course in English Literature," *PMLA*, I (1884–1885), 84–95; and J. M. Garnett, "The Course in English and Its Value as a Discipline," *ibid.*, pp. 25–36.

[10] W. T. Hewett, "The Aims and Methods of Collegiate Instruction in Modern Languages," *ibid.*, pp. 25–36.

[11] Hart, *op. cit.*, p. 85; Hewitt, *op. cit.*, pp. 33–34; Garnett, *op. cit.*, pp. 66–69, 72–73. Cf. T. W. Hunt, "The Place of English in the College Curriculum," *PMLA*, I, 118–132; and Franklin Carter, "Study of Modern Languages in Our Higher Institutions," *ibid.*, II, 3–21.

> . . . to enter by the imagination into the spiritual experiences of all the historic protagonists of civilization in a given period and area of culture; to think the thoughts, to feel the emotions, to partake the aspirations, recorded in literature; to become one with humanity and in the struggles of a given nation or race to perceive and attain the ideal of existence; and then to judge rightly these various disclosures of the human spirit, and to reveal to the world their true significance and relative importance.[12]

There is a good deal of Matthew Arnold in both Wilson and Cook, and the issues in their debate were perhaps most clearly formulated in the discussion of the "historical estimate" and the "real estimate" in Arnold's "The Study of Poetry," first written as an introduction to A. W. Ward's *English Poets*, 1880, an anthology widely used as a college text. If Cook differed from Wilson and Arnold, it was chiefly in insisting—as no doubt a scholar should—that the "real" value of literary studies could not be reached without the prior discipline of historical and linguistic understanding. All three believed that the true significance of literature was moral, lying in the thoughts, feelings, and aspirations expressed by great writers in all periods.

II

Two large currents of thought affected the teaching of English literature in the first half of the twentieth century. The general education movement, beginning just before the First World War, was a reaction against the overspecialization and fragmentation of knowledge which seemed to have developed under the elective system. The other influence, on the side of scholarship and criticism, was a reaction against the philological approach to literature. This movement also began to emerge before 1920.

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[12] Albert S. Cook, "The Province of English Philology," *PMLA*, XIII (1898), 195. See also pp. 185–204.

In the first two decades of this century, the organization of instruction in American colleges and universities had become almost uniform throughout the country. Liberal knowledge was divided into distinct fields ranging in an orderly spectrum from the exact sciences through the various social studies to the humanistic disciplines of history, languages, literature, and philosophy. Responsibility for each field was vested in a department of the faculty composed of scholars thoroughly trained in their particular specialties; both research and teaching were organized departmentally. The curriculum was a complex pattern of separate courses, each dealing with some part of one field of study, from which students selected and combined a relatively small number to make up their individual program of studies. Their choices, no longer entirely free, were restricted by rules of "distribution" and "concentration," often designated as *group* requirements for the bachelor's degree and *major* requirements within the field of concentration. The first was designed to ensure some breadth and balance in the student's total course of study, some general understanding of the main fields of liberal knowledge. The second guaranteed training of greater depth and rigor in one subject. On most campuses there were a few courses specially designed to meet distribution requirements, but in general the elementary courses in all fields, including literature, were expected to serve the double purpose of specialized training for majors and liberal or general education for nonspecialists.

The main themes of the movement which gradually modified this pattern were first clearly stated in Alexander Meiklejohn's inaugural address as president of Amherst in 1912. Calling for a "radical reversal of the arrangement of the college curriculum," he attacked the existing system on three counts. Even as modified by distribution rules, he contended, the elective system continued to allow many students to graduate without exposure to essential aspects of liberal knowledge. In the second place, there was no synthesis of the knowledge divided and scattered in separate departmental courses, no "bringing together of separate things to find out their relations." Finally, most college courses were too technical, being taught by men "whose law it is to know the special from the special point of view."[13] Although these criticisms did not result in any radical reversal of the curriculum, many American colleges and universities went through a period of soul-searching before and after the Second World War. Notable reforms were adopted, especially in the first two college years, at Columbia, Chicago, Harvard, and many smaller and less famous institutions.[14]

The major innovations, intended to meet the first two points in Meiklejohn's indictment, were a further restriction of the elective principle by the prescription of particular courses designed specifically for purposes of general education, instead of allowing a choice among alternatives, and the introduction of a new kind of interdisciplinary course in science, social science, or the humanities. Few colleges went all the way in these reforms. Many continued to allow some choices in meeting group requirements, and the new general education courses were often staffed from a single department. They were usually broader in scope than traditional first courses, however, and many of them made a serious effort to "bring together separate things" in a synthesis of the sciences or humanities, if not in liberal knowledge as a whole.

A few universities went farther, especially in meeting Meiklejohn's third charge. The most radical departure was the Experimental College which Meiklejohn himself founded and directed at Wisconsin. The experiment was abolished by vote of the University faculty in 1932, after five years of hectic life, but some of its ideas and devices are still at work in a program of Integrated Studies. Chicago, spurred on by R. M. Hutchins, established the College as a division of the faculty charged specifically to "do the work of the University in general higher education," and at Minnesota President Coffman persuaded the faculty to create the General College with a parallel assignment, though primarily for ill-prepared or less able students. Sharply contrasted in their educational philosophies, both colleges were set up to reduce overspecialization by transferring the responsibility for general education from the departments to a new agency created for that purpose.[15]

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[13] Alexander Meiklejohn, *The Liberal College* (Boston, 1920), especially pp. 9, 26, 29–30, 63, 74.

[14] The three programs mentioned are described in *General Education in a Free Society* (Cambridge, 1945); *A College Program in Action* (New York, 1946); and *The Idea and Practice of General Education* (Chicago, 1950). See also H. T. Morse, ed., *General Education in Transition* (Minneapolis, 1951).

Since literature has always had a central role in liberal education, most departments of English were deeply involved in faculty debates on general education. Sometimes leading the reformers, sometimes defending the status quo, they were almost always in the center of the battle. When the dust began to settle, it appeared that the most important change had been the establishment of new freshman or sophomore courses with a broader content than the traditional survey course of English literature, long the standard first course. Some of these broader courses will be discussed later in this chapter. Other new courses go further and combine literature with other humanistic studies —history, philosophy, the fine arts; these interdisciplinary courses will be the subject of the following chapter.

Changes in general educational theory and practice have thus modified the earlier introductory English course, but modifications have also come from within the discipline itself. When teaching is done by scholars, men actively engaged in the study of their subjects, both individual courses and the curriculum as a whole are bound to be responsive to technical developments. In this century, as already indicated in the preceding chapter, the college curriculum in English has been profoundly influenced by new tendencies in scholarship and criticism.

The most important changes in literary study during the last thirty or forty years have resulted from a widespread but heterogeneous reaction against the philological approach to literature. In attacking the scholarship of the 1880's, Woodrow Wilson ascribed its ascendancy to the "scientific and positivistic spirit of the age," and René Wellek has described some twentieth century

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[15] For a fuller discussion of the movement see Hoyt Trowbridge, "Forty Years of General Education," *Journal of General Education*, XI (1958), 161–169.

European movements in aesthetics and criticism as a "revolt against positivism."[16] The justice of the description is dubious; Wellek acknowledges that few literary scholars accepted and applied the doctrines of Spencer and Comte, even in methodology, and the Arnoldian values and ideals of A. S. Cook and other American philologists were anything but positivistic. There is no doubt, however, that a number of ideas from several fields of thought have converged to undermine the prestige of the older scholarship and to give a new direction to literary criticism.

Among the innumerable ebbs, flows, and cross currents of critical fashion during this century, the most lasting and far-reaching in its effect on college teaching was undoubtedly the school of thought foreshadowed as early as 1910 in the first publications of C. K. Ogden, a British psychologist, and fully displayed in two books written in collaboration with his Cambridge colleague I. A. Richards (*The Foundations of Aesthetics*, 1921; *The Meaning of Meaning*, 1923). The theory took its start in speculative linguistics, derived its explanatory principles from stimulus-response psychology, and drew its most challenging conclusions in logic and aesthetics. The founders of the school, highly conscious of an iconoclastic mission, were greatly interested from the beginning in the practical implications of their doctrine for both criticism and education.

The essential principle of the new psycholinguistic science was a division of the functions of language into the symbolic or referential, as in scientific statement, and the emotive or attitudinal, as in poetry and most religious and metaphysical discourse. From their analysis of the first function of language, Ogden and Richards derived canons of symbolism, rules of definition, and other concepts in symbolic logic. Their ideas were similar to those being developed, with a good deal more analytical rigor, by Russell, Wittgenstein, and others at the same period. From the second function of language, Ogden and Richards deduced their aesthetics, their critical system, and most of their educational ideas.

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[16] René Wellek, "The Revolt against Positivism in Recent European Literary Scholarship," in W. S. Knickerbocker, ed., *Twentieth Century English* (New York, 1946), pp. 67–89.

Richards wrote three books primarily concerned with literary education: *Practical Criticism*, 1929, *The Philosophy of Rhetoric*, 1936, and *Interpretation in Teaching*, 1938. The first of these, in many ways his most interesting and appealing work, was also the one which had the greatest direct influence on college teachers. It embodied the same theories expounded in his earlier, more technical writings, but here they were presented with only a minimum of dogmatic argument, and chiefly through a practical demonstration of the urgent need for new methods of instruction.

The book grew directly from Richards' own experience as a teacher of English. Its most engaging feature was the fresh evidence he presented of the reading capacity and habits of his students, as shown in the "protocols" or written comments he invited them to make on a series of short poems, English and American, which were distributed to them on printed sheets, without clues to the authorship or provenance of the poems. Most of the students were Cambridge undergraduates reading English as candidates for an honors degree.

The protocols included some brilliant explications, but for the most part they revealed a lamentably low standard of critical discernment, all the more shocking because of the writers' generally high ability. As Richards remarked, it would be unreasonable to expect much better reading from any group under present cultural conditions, and even teachers of literature would have to admit, if they were frank with themselves, that their own ways of reading often showed similar deficiencies.[17] In the main body of the book, systematically reviewing the protocols, Richards analyzed the presuppositions and interpretive biases which seemed to account for the errors of his subjects. With a teacher's faith that the shortcomings of students are not "native inalterable defects," he attempted in the closing section to propose some possible remedies, "educational methods more efficient than those we use now in developing discrimination and the power to understand what we hear and read."[18]

The doctrine of Ogden and Richards was never widely accepted as a complete system. Even in literary criticism, where its influence was most pervasive, some parts of the system proved more viable than others. Of Richards' "four kinds of meaning," the last two (tone and intention) were usually overlooked or rejected.[19] Most critics influenced by Richards adopted his idea of the heterogeneity of poetic language but either distinguished only the first two kinds of meaning, sense and feeling, or concentrated on conflicts of attitude in a poem without regard to varying levels of meaning. The most influential part of the doctrine was the dialectical opposition of poetry to science, defined as contrasted ways of using language, and the conception of poetic utterance as embodying a tension between opposed impulses or principles. This concept provided the theoretical focus of the movement, chiefly American, which came to be known as the "New Criticism." Poetic tension was described under various terms, but whatever their terminology, these critics all followed Richards in his defense of poetry as a means of bringing order to the mind through a synthesis or equilibrium of opposing forces.

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[17] I. A. Richards, *Practical Criticism. A Study of Literary Judgment*, 4th impression (New York, 1939), pp. 4–5, 309–310.

[18] *Ibid.*, pp. 3, 309.

Both the theory and the practice of these critics were severely criticized,[20] but in spite of objections the new school clearly dominated American literary criticism in the 1930's and 1940's, and its influence spread rapidly in colleges and universities. The technique of the protocols was widely imitated, and textbooks like *Understanding Poetry* by Brooks and Warren were widely adopted in introductory courses. One of the many courses that developed under the double influence of the New Criticism and the general education movement, Harvard's Humanities 6, will be described later in this chapter.

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[19] W. K. Wimsatt and Monroe S. Beardsley, though sympathetic to other aspects of Richards' system, argued in "The Intentional Fallacy," *Sewanee Review*, LIV (1946), 468–488, that knowledge of a writer's intention is inaccessible, and in any case irrelevant to evaluation; in a later paper, "The Affective Fallacy," *ibid.*, LVII (1949), 31–55, they attacked the still more basic concept of art as essentially emotive. Both papers have been reprinted several times, and appear in Wimsatt, *The Verbal Icon* (Lexington, 1954).

[20] Douglas Bush, "The New Criticism: Some Old-Fashioned Queries," *PMLA*, LXIV, Part II (1949), 13–21; O. J. Campbell, "Shakespeare and the 'New Critics,'" in *Joseph Quincy Adams: Memorial Studies* (Washington, 1948), pp. 81–96; R. H. Fogle, "Romantic Bards and Metaphysical Reviewers," in *The Imagery of Keats and Shelley* (Chapel Hill, 1949), pp. 241–278. Many similar protests could be listed. From R. S. Crane and Elder Olson came a more concentrated attack challenging the whole approach to poetry as a mode of utterance to be distinguished from other things by its way of using language; see the essays on Richards, Empson, Brooks, Heilman, and Warren in R. S. Crane, ed., *Critics and Criticism* (Chicago, 1952), pp. 27–144; and Crane, *The Languages of Criticism and the Structure of Poetry* (Toronto, 1953).

In retrospect it seems obvious that college teachers welcomed the New Criticism because it seemed to meet a need—a perennial need of literary study. As practiced since the time of the Greeks, literary scholarship is a powerful technique for the exegesis—the preservation even—of texts and for the systematic study of many important aspects of literature. But scholarship as such is not concerned with aesthetic evaluation and offers no principles or methods usable for that purpose. Yet to read and judge with discernment are essential aims of literary instruction, and these require some sort of "intellectual instruments" (as Richards calls them), general theories as to the kind of thing a poem is, the parts or elements into which it may be analyzed, the criteria appropriate in judging its excellence as a work of art.[21] For these theories we must look outside scholarship to criticism. If the school of Richards and the New Critics appealed so strongly, it was because the critics concerned themselves with individual poems, novels, and plays and seemed to offer a procedure for "developing discrimination and the power to understand what we hear and read."

The present introductory course of study in English and American literature, to be described in the rest of this chapter, is the joint result of the historical forces and ideas that have been discussed here. It seems probable that the general education movement and the critical school founded by Ogden and Richards have both passed the peak of their influence; their lessons have been assimilated, to the extent that college teachers believed them to be valid, and it is unlikely that any new impulse toward change can be expected from these sources. We can be sure, however, that the teaching of literature will continue to be swept by shifting winds of doctrine in many fields of thought, but especially in educational theory and in scholarship and criticism.

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[21] Crane, *The Languages of Criticism*, pp. xi-xv.

III

The most important parts of the curriculum offered by any department of English are its first courses in writing and in literature. These courses are the base of the pyramid, the foundation on which the whole structure rests. Even more important, they are the courses in which teachers of English have their best chance—with some students their only chance—to open the world of the humanities to minds often ignorant of its value. The difficulties are great, but the opportunity is even greater.

The "first" course in English and American literature is not always easy to identify. On many campuses, the first course in literature is often the second half of the freshman writing course. English 1B at California, for example, is "an introduction to literature, with further training in writing." At New Mexico the title of the second semester of the required course in composition is "Writing with Readings in Literature." In such cases, students electing a survey of English literature as sophomores are in effect taking their second college course in the subject.

Even if we disregard composition courses in which the reading is primarily literary, the variety of parallel or partially competing "first" courses is considerable. Many colleges, including some with highly selective admission standards, offer several alternatives at the freshman or sophomore level, among which students are allowed to choose or to which they are assigned according to their talent, interest, or previous preparation. There are introductory courses for those with unusually high or low verbal aptitude test scores, for those with good or poor high school records, for nonmajors and those expecting to specialize in literature. Yale, for example, offers two parallel writing courses, English 10 and 15, "Problems in Writing and Reading" and "Literary Interpretation and Analysis," both of which are similar to California's 1B and New Mexico's 2. There are also two parallel first courses in literature: English 24, "Readings in Literature," and 25, "Representative English Authors." Either normally follows 10 or 15, though both are open to entering freshmen with exceptional records in English; 25 is prerequisite for the English major and is also recommended for students especially interested in history or the arts in general. In addition there is English 27, "Studies in Literary Form," which may be counted toward the major but is not required; it is primarily for juniors and seniors, but it may be elected by sophomores who have completed English 24 or 25.

The Yale courses illustrate a major difficulty for those who would distinguish among courses in English, American, and world literature. These categories, though still largely valid at more advanced levels, have been progressively broken down in introductory courses. The readings in English 15 at Yale include short stories, novels by Faulkner and Dostoevsky, and two English novels in the fall term; the spring semester is devoted to English poetry and three Shakespeare plays. Something like two-thirds of the literature read in the course is English, the rest being American or continental European, chiefly modern. English 24 includes a similar proportion of British and non-British writings but with a sampling of classical works in translation. Homer, Sophocles, Dante, and Shakespeare (four plays) are presented in the first semester and *Paradise Lost, Don Juan, The Mayor of Casterbridge,* and modern poetry (British and American) in the spring. The two terms of English 27 constitute another mixed course including Homer, Greek tragedy, Shakespeare, some modern European drama, three English, American, or continental novels, and a sampling of British poetry (Marvell, Blake, Keats, or Yeats). Of all these courses, the only one wholly devoted to English literature is 25, the course required for the departmental major.[22] Except in such courses, in chronological surveys of world literature, and in some Great Books humanities courses, the old historical-philological focus on "civilization in a given period and area of culture" has largely disappeared at the introductory level.

Almost all the first courses now being taught in this country may be classified under one or another of four roughly distinguishable types. Historically organized surveys of English literature are still taught almost everywhere, though they have been considerably modified in content and purpose since the golden age of philological scholarship. Most departments continue to require or recommend such a course as the starting point for students majoring in English; in a few colleges, however, the survey is postponed until the senior year and provides a final historical overview. A second type, often recommended for nonmajors, is organized primarily by literary genres rather than chronologically. Sometimes limited or chiefly devoted to nineteenth and twentieth century writings, these courses are variously described as "Introduction to Literature," "Modern Literature," or "Modern Drama, Novel, and Poetry." In a third kind of course, although English literature is still the dominant element, the readings include classical or medieval literature in translation and in some cases selections from the Bible, possibly one or two Platonic dialogues, and other philosophical or historiographical masterpieces. Often the result of a curricular reform influenced by the general education movement, such courses are frequently listed under Humanities in college catalogs and are administered and staffed, nominally if not actually, as interdepartmental offerings.[23] The fourth type is designed specifically to develop the students' interpretive and critical powers; sometimes hard to distinguish from the second or third type, these courses typically devote much attention to close reading of lyric poems, though not to the exclusion of other genres. Most courses of this last kind originated in the intellectual climate of the New Criticism, but the interpretive methods or evaluative principles accepted and taught by the instructors are not necessarily those of that school.

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[22] I am indebted to Professor F. W. Hilles, who kindly provided me with syllabi, sample examinations, and other instructional materials used in the freshman and sophomore courses at Yale.

As these descriptions imply, none of the four kinds of course is entirely separable from the others. Being compromises among a variety of educational, scholarly, and aesthetic assumptions, all are eclectic to some degree in aim, content, and method. The differences among them, consequently, are not clear-cut oppositions of principle but rather variations of degree in relative emphasis among multiple purposes, in the particular balance struck among mixed materials and in the organizing concepts which determine the arrangement or sequence of presentation. It might be more accurate to describe them as subtypes of a single composite species, though in practice the four kinds of course undoubtedly do produce significantly different educational results.

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[23] It follows that these courses—and some genre courses as well—must be treated both here and in Professor Pooley's chapter on Interdisciplinary Courses.

An admirable example of the historical survey, as conceived today, is "The Development of English Literature" at Swarthmore. English 3-4, one of two introductory courses open to freshmen, is recommended for students who intend to concentrate in English, history, or fine arts. (The alternative, with a more miscellaneous and somewhat larger enrollment, is English 1, "Modern Literature," a one-semester course with materials drawn chiefly from writings in English since the First World War.)[24] Although the readings in English Literature 3-4 are presented in chronological sequence, the emphasis in teaching is by no means exclusively historical. The instructors do not fail to demonstrate relationships between literary expression and its cultural milieu, nor to take advantage of historical background whenever it contributes to the elucidation of a text or the development of literary discernment. They stress equally introductions to the literary uses of language, to the dominant literary forms, and to principles of critical evaluation. Their primary aim is the cultivation of the student's own taste.

I. A. Richards suggested in *Practical Criticism* that some of the time devoted to extensive reading might profitably be made available for direct training in literary interpretation. Whether influenced by Richards or by their own experience in teaching, many departments of English in American colleges have made room for such training within the traditional survey course by shortening its chronological scope, limiting the works studied chiefly to those by major authors, or otherwise reducing the total amount of material to be covered. Among the consequences of this policy has been a rather widespread tendency to begin the course with Chaucer, entirely omitting the Old English period, and to eliminate writers of secondary historical or aesthetic significance.

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[24] English 1 is most often followed by a semester course in music, art, or religion. Though some students complete the requirement by electing one of several period courses in earlier English literature, this plan does allow students to graduate without any study of literature before the twentieth century. Since in many curricula (science or engineering, for example) a student is not likely to have any other contact with past outlooks, such a basic course can hardly be recommended except for colleges with very well-prepared students.

Some minor writers are taught in the Swarthmore survey course, but it does not attempt to include *Beowulf* or other examples of Anglo-Saxon literature. In the first semester the readings begin with a small but very interesting sampling of medieval lyrics and carols, move quickly to *The Canterbury Tales* and *Gawain*, and proceed through the Elizabethan period to Pope, Swift, and Johnson. Other writers represented are Malory, Spenser, Donne, and Dryden. Shakespeare is not taught in "The Development of English Literature," but he is well represented elsewhere in the curriculum by a popular course at the sophomore level for nonmajors, a two-semester course covering the complete works and required for senior majors, and an honors seminar offered each semester. Plays by Shakespeare can be taught with great success to freshmen, but their omission from some first courses is certainly defensible. Much more to be regretted, in my opinion, is the loss of *Beowulf*. It is not an easy work to begin a course with, but the very strangeness of its imaginative and moral world makes it a revelation to many students. It offers unmatched opportunities for comparison with the chivalric world and the romance form, which followed it in the older survey courses, and few works provide better nourishment for the historical imagination.

To illustrate the major literary genres, the readings in English 3 include examples of romance (*Gawain*, "The Franklin's Tale," *Morte D'Arthur*), lyric poetry, tragic drama (*Dr. Faustus*), comedy and satire ("The Nun's Priest's Tale," *Second Shepherd's Play, The Shoemaker's Holiday, The Alchemist*, Pope's epistles, *Gulliver's Travels*), and conventions or techniques such as pastoral and allegory. A framework of principles and technical vocabulary is also provided through the use of M. H. Abrams' *Glossary of Literary Terms* and by readings in literary criticism of the periods covered in the course. Something is also done along the way with metrics, including the medieval alliterative tradition and the special effects of rhythm and stress made possible by Chaucer's highly inflected language.

A plan of this kind may seem too eclectic in its underlying rationale and perhaps also unduly complex and ambitious for freshmen, even of the caliber admitted at Swarthmore. Professor Daniel G. Hoffman, who kindly provided most of the information summarized here, concedes that the course may seem to present a "complicated skein of concepts." He believes, however, that there is a positive value in presenting so wide a variety of both ideas and materials. They help the student to realize that literature has many dimensions and that his comprehension and enjoyment can be increased by assimilating as many ways of approaching it as he can. To assist in this process, Mr. Hoffman assigns a series of short papers in which students are asked to select a crucial passage in each of the major works studied and to explain both its significance in itself and its relation to the meaning and structure of the work as a whole. In their cumulative effect, these recurrent exercises not only give valuable practice in interpretation and critical judgment but also help to focus the diverse materials of the course on the primary aim, the cultivation of literary understanding and taste.

Although the concept of genre is an important element in the Swarthmore course, the order in which the materials are presented is of course determined by chronology. One of the oldest and most successful of the courses organized primarily by literary types is Wisconsin's English 33, "Introduction to Literature in English," a year-course for sophomores. There are many good courses of this kind, and if this example is chosen for discussion here, I must confess that the reasons are partly personal and even sentimental. I took English 33 as a sophomore at Wisconsin a good many years ago, taught discussion sections in it while working toward the doctorate, and lectured in the course during my first years of full-time teaching. It was a pleasure to teach then, and the present instructors still enjoy it and believe in it.

English 33 was established in the early 1920's, well before the emergence of either the general education movement or the New Criticism, but it anticipated some elements of both. It was introduced as an alternative to the survey of English literature, which had been the only introductory course, and was conceived as especially suited to the needs of the general student. Alexander Meiklejohn had not yet come to Wisconsin, and I doubt that Professor Arthur Beatty, the founder of English 33, had read Meiklejohn's Amherst inaugural address. He certainly believed, however, that for many students liberal education could best be served by a first course in literature which did not treat "the special from the special point of view." Among other cheerfully crotchety explanations of his philosophy, he used to say that 33 was a course in poems and stories, that our main job was to teach students how to read such things, and that the instructors ought to "have some sin in them."

At present, "Introduction to Literature in English" is one of five literature courses, all open to sophomores, among which students may choose in meeting group requirements. There are two survey courses, one in English and the other in American literature, a course in contemporary literature, and a comparatively new course, combining chronological sequence with a central emphasis on literary genres, which is part of a program in General Honors for superior students. Like all the others except the honors course, English 33 is taught in a number of sections with several hundred students in each; there are two lectures a week, with one discussion meeting in groups of twenty-five. The course is described as follows in the catalog:

> Intensive analysis of literary classics and significant contemporary works, both British and American, to reveal principles of aesthetic structure and convention. Organization of the course is according to literary type (epic, novel, lyric, tragedy, comedy, etc.) rather than historical sequence.

One advantage of the abandonment of chronological order is that a course can begin wherever the instructors please. Following an ancient rule of thumb in teaching, the staff of English 33 has designed a sequence of readings for the opening weeks of the course that moves from the simple to the complex. For many years the first unit, covering about three weeks of lectures and discussions, has begun with a primitive form of narrative, the

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ballad, then taken up half a dozen examples of the dramatic monologue, and concluded with a few slightly longer narrative or seminarrative poems, such as "La Belle Dame Sans Merci," "The Eve of St. Agnes," Eliot's "Journey of the Magi," and Marvell's "Bermudas." In this rapid, highly selective prelude to literary study, the instructors present a small number of theoretical concepts and definitions, which are illustrated by and tested against the poems discussed, and also begin to demonstrate the kinds of questions it is appropriate to raise about such works and some of the ways in which competent readers may seek for answers to those questions.

The students are then plunged directly into an intensive three-week study of *Paradise Lost*, one of the most complex and difficult long narrative poems in English. They read two-thirds of it, omitting the four central Books but covering the whole of Books I-IV and IX-XII. This part of the course is concluded by a sixth-week examination, so that students have a measure of their progress and performance reasonably early in the term. The rest of the fall semester is devoted to drama. After two Shaw plays and four recent tragedies and comedies, there is another hour examination; December and January are devoted to four Shakespearean plays—*Henry IV*, Parts I and II, *King Lear*, and *The Tempest*.

The forms studied in the second semester are lyric poetry, satire, and the novel. The selection of examples again includes both "literary classics" and "significant contemporary works," with some American as well as British writings, and chronological sequence is once more disregarded. In the first two weeks a typical series of assignments might be arranged in the following order:

Wordsworth, "I Wandered Lonely as a Cloud" and "Solitary Reaper"
Hardy, "The Darkling Thrush" and "The Oxen"
Frost, "Tree at My Window"
Herrick, "To the Virgins"
Hopkins, "Spring and Fall"
Yeats, "The Magi" and "The Dolls" (also "Byzantium" and "Sailing to Byzantium" in the third week)
Marvell, "To His Coy Mistress"
MacLeish, "You, Andrew Marvell"
Donne, "Go, and Catch a Falling Star"

Auden, "Musée des Beaux Arts"
Shelley, "Ode to the West Wind"
Housman, three poems from *A Shropshire Lad*

The readings in satire, similarly, have usually been *The Rape of the Lock*, two-thirds of *Don Juan*, and all four of *Gulliver's Travels*. In the last eight weeks of the course variations of the novel form may be illustrated by Jane Austen, D. H. Lawrence, Dickens, Graham Greene, Emily Bronte, and Conrad in that order.

The most striking difference between "Introduction to Literature in English" and other kinds of first courses is probably its heavy representation of narrative literature. Except for one week devoted to dramatic monologue, a form which includes character but not plot, the first semester is wholly concerned with epic, drama, and shorter literary types in which plot, a connected sequence of actions, is the dominant and unifying element. In the second half of the course, eight weeks are assigned to the novel, another genre in which plot is the essential structural principle. Four weeks are allowed for satire. Satire is an important and interesting literary form, distinguished by the rhetorical purpose of criticism through ridicule. A satirical work may borrow devices, techniques, or conventions from any genre, may be ordered to any unifying principle, but all the examples considered in English 33 employ narrative structure and method. Only the first four weeks of the spring semester are devoted to lyric poetry, a little over 10 percent of the full-year course, and no single poet is represented by more than three or four poems. After studying plays for eleven weeks and novels for eight weeks in the spring, students should have attained a good understanding of the "principles of aesthetic structure and convention" appropriate to those forms, as well as a fair command of the unique idiom, the individual style of thought and art, of Shakespeare, Conrad, and one or two other major writers. It is scarcely possible that anything comparable could be achieved in the short time and limited selection allowed for the lyric form.

It is true, although critics and theorists since Coleridge have often forgotten the fact, that the dominant forms have always been narrative, whether epic, dramatic, or novelistic. These are also the forms with which students have most often had some acquaintance before taking a college course in literature, and which they are most likely to continue to turn to for literary enjoyment after their schooling is finished. For the same reasons, however, lyric poetry is usually strange and puzzling to them; they have more to learn from this kind of writing than from others, and they need more help if they are to read such works with understanding and critical discrimination. English 33 would serve its students better, I believe, if the time assigned to the lyric were doubled and if at least one lyric poet were read in some depth.

The great strength of this course lies in the boldness with which the staff has used its freedom to select and arrange the writings to be taught. It is meant to be interesting and even exciting for the students, many of whom will have no further work in literature, but it has never been conceived as an easy course. Both in their difficulty and in the speed with which they must be read, the assignments are demanding. The omission of Chaucer may be thought regrettable, especially since an approach through literary types is so appropriate and fruitful in teaching *The Canterbury Tales.* But when students are expected to read two modern plays a week, eight novels in the same number of weeks, four Shakespeare plays in five weeks, the whole of *Gulliver's Travels* in two weeks, and eight books of *Paradise Lost* in three, they are certainly not being coddled or pampered. The selection of contemporary works has been changed much more often over the years than the selection of classics. Some of them are not quite up to the standard of literary excellence set by the older writings, but they do give the course a vividness and relevance from the student's point of view which would otherwise be missing.

A similar flexibility and daring are evident in the arrangement of these materials. Both semesters begin with short pieces which are intensively analyzed, then shift suddenly to long and complex masterpieces, *Paradise Lost* in the fall and *Don Juan* in the spring. The sequence is sometimes from easier to more difficult readings, especially when new basic concepts are being established, but it is often dictated by opportunities to compare or contrast ideas and styles. The course has great variety and is full of surprises, striking juxtapositions, and changes of pace, while at the same time a framework of concepts about literary types, principles of structure, and aesthetic theory provides the student with organizing ideas and tools of interpretation which run through the varied materials and bind them together. These are the special virtues of introductory courses organized by genres, and the Wisconsin example fully displays them.[25]

Introductory chronological surveys are still usually limited to British writings, while courses organized by genres often include some American works. Broader in scope than either is a third kind of introductory course, sometimes part of a prescribed general education program and at some colleges designated in the catalog as humanities, which may include not only literary works translated into English from other languages but also some philosophical writings, selections from the Bible, or other works which are not literary at all, in a strict sense, since they subordinate aesthetic considerations to other purposes. Although they encompass a wider range of materials, such courses belong in this chapter as an important and distinctive variant of the first course in literature for students on many American campuses. In practice, most of them represent literature more fully than they do other forms of writing, and the reading lists are usually dominated by English authors.

The "core course" in literature at Iowa has existed in approximately its present form since a major revision of the general education program in 1944. Some of its basic features are still older, dating back to a two-year required sequence for freshmen and sophomores, "Literature and the Art of Writing," which was instituted in the early 1930's. Norman Foerster, then director of the School of Letters at Iowa, had been considerably influenced by the teachings of Irving Babbitt, whose *Literature and the American College: Essays in Defense of the Humanities* was published in 1908, when Foerster was an undergraduate at Harvard.

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[25] I am grateful to Professor Carl Woodring, formerly a member of the Department of English at Wisconsin, now at Columbia, for information about current practices in English 33, and to Professors John J. Enck and Robert K. Presson for writing to me about other introductory courses at Wisconsin.

The *paideia* of these "New Humanists" was summed up by Foerster in the Longinian definition of a scholar: "a man of intelligence who is well versed in literature." While acknowledging the importance of philological and historical scholarship as a technical discipline, both he and Babbitt argued for a new synthesis of scholarship and criticism. Essentially Arnoldian in their emphasis upon ideas and ethical values, they wanted literary study to require "not only accuracy, thoroughness, and the sense of time, but also aesthetic sensitiveness, the ability to write firmly, a concern for general ideas, and an insight into the permanent human values embodied in literature."[26]

This point of view was not rejected in the curricular reform of 1944. The changes were chiefly administrative, though important in their effects: separation of literary study from training in composition, with eight hours credit allowed for the course in literature, and transfer of nominal responsibility for its management from the department of English directly to the College of Liberal Arts. The course was conceived as a nonspecialized introduction to humanistic study in which literature was to be presented as an "imitation and criticism of life." Along with parallel eight-hour courses in natural sciences, social sciences, and historical-cultural studies, it was prescribed for all students in the College of Liberal Arts.[27]

The conception of a single required interdepartmental course has been gradually softened in the last twenty years. In practice, although occasional sections are taught by instructors in classics, the core course in literature is now staffed almost wholly by members of the department of English. Two alternative sequences are offered within the core courses itself, so that students actually have a fair range of choice in meeting general education requirements. There are also special sections for superior students, about 8 percent of those enrolled.

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[26] Norman Foerster, "The Study of Letters," in *Literary Scholarship. Its Aims and Methods* (Chapel Hill, 1941), pp. 5, 14, 20, 24–32. See also Foerster: *The American Scholar, A Study in Litterae Inhumaniores* (Chapel Hill, 1929); *Toward Standards* (New York, 1930); "Literary Scholarship and Criticism," *English Journal*, College Edition, XXV (1936), 224–232; *The American State University* (Chapel Hill, 1937); and *The Future of the Liberal College* (New York, 1938).

[27] See John C. McGalliard, "The Literature 'Core' at the State University of Iowa," *Journal of General Education*, II (1948), 204–214.

In spite of very large course enrollments (about 2,000 students in the various sections of the two alternative sequences), the course has traditionally been taught in sections of thirty, each meeting four times a week. In the last five or six years—primarily, no doubt, for budgetary reasons—the use of lectures has been slowly increasing, until at present about a third of the students are taught in sections of 300 or more twice a week, with discussion groups of twenty or fewer meeting on the other two days. In small as well as in large sections, each instructor is responsible for his own class, subject to common minimal reading lists and tentative calendars; the final examination for each sequence is drafted by a committee, but all written assignments and all examinations except the final one are determined by the individual instructor. Staff meetings are sometimes devoted to discussing various interpretations of the works read and ways in which they might be taught, but there is no attempt to impose a uniform reading or approach.

Only one-half of Literature 5 and 6, "Ancient and Modern Literature," is devoted to writings in English (British and American), the first semester being taken up by selections from the Bible, the *Odyssey,* five Greek plays, and four of the shorter Platonic dialogues. The second semester of the course devotes about half its time to Chaucer and Shakespeare, with the remainder going to lyric poetry and prose fiction. The sequence is roughly chronological for the most part, and the emphasis in teaching tends to be on the concept of "the European tradition" and on the literary embodiment of ideas and values. For Norman Foerster thirty years ago the course had a unifying idea in Matthew Arnold's concept of Hebraism and Hellenism; while this emphasis has largely disappeared, the course is still in many respects what Foerster advocated.

Literature 7 and 8, "Masterpieces of Literature," does not specifically cover classical or biblical backgrounds, but some such material comes in incidentally. Its first semester is taken up by a strong quartet—Dante, Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Milton. The second semester moves from Molière and *Gulliver* through a few nineteenth century works and allows substantial units on modern poetry, fiction, and drama. Chaucer and Shakespeare are common to both of the Iowa sequences, and both include examples of the major genres. Students write several critical essays in all sections, with a minimum total of some 3,500 words expected each semester.

The Iowa core courses are one-third longer than most first courses, meeting four times a week instead of three, and they have an enviable advantage in the generous allocations of time made possible by the additional hours. Some hard choices have to be made even under these favorable conditions, of course. The time assigned to lyric poetry in "Ancient and Modern Literature" is only twelve class meetings, the same number reserved for it in English 33 at Wisconsin. In both cases the choice is dictated by the aims of the course—at Iowa by the commitment to Greek literature, philosophy, and readings from the Bible; at Wisconsin by the emphasis on contemporary plays and novels. In the Swarthmore course, similarly, Professor Hoffman could make room for Shakespeare and save more time for Chaucer and Swift (five and three meetings respectively) if he were willing to omit the selections from the critics or to eliminate *Gawain*, Malory, and the *Faerie Queene*. But these sacrifices would violate the philosophy on which the course is based.

Such choices are much less difficult at Iowa, where there is time enough to devote sixteen meetings to Chaucer in either of its alternative courses. As against fifteen class hours assigned to four Shakespeare plays in the Wisconsin course, about twenty are available in each Iowa course. With small classes too in most cases, the department at Iowa has an almost unique opportunity to explore the readings in depth with active participation by the students.

Apart from this important temporal advantage, the most unusual feature of the core courses is their historic commitment to the presentation of literature as a criticism of life. This idea does not exclude other approaches. It is recognized that literature is also an art, and the aims in teaching include the cultivation of responsible critical appreciation as well as some theoretical understanding of the functions of literature and its principal forms. Although both sequences strike a balance among these diverse conceptions and purposes, there is a difference of degree between them; as one would expect from the readings, "Ancient and Modern Literature" gives more emphasis to ideas and values, while the "Masterpieces" course gives somewhat greater attention to formal matters.[28]

The last kind of course to be discussed here is one that has been influenced by both the educational ideals of the general education movement and the critical tradition of I. A. Richards. The example I want to examine is Humanities 6, "Introduction to Literature," taught at Harvard by Professor Reuben A. Brower and a staff of younger colleagues. The lineal descendant of an earlier course which Brower taught at Amherst, it has been evolving with a constant aim but changing means for twenty years. It is now one of five options in the humanities area of Harvard's general education program, normally recommended for students expecting to major in English and usually to be followed in the sophomore year by English 10, a survey of English literature "from the beginning to the present, concentrating on major authors."

The philosophy underlying the course has been explained in Brower's book, *The Fields of Light,* and in essay, "Reading in Slow Motion," which was first prepared for a symposium at the University of Michigan and has recently been reprinted as the first chapter of *In Defense of Reading,* a collection of critical essays written by present and former teachers of Humanities 6.[29] Brower is so much concerned with reading as a direct experience of the work that he sometimes sounds almost anti-intellectual in his attitude toward theory. He introduces his own principles in a sidelong, half-apologetic fashion, referring to them as "notions," a scaffolding or set of temporarily useful tools, which he encourages the reader to throw away as soon as they have served their merely heuristic purpose of "calling attention to the poem and how it is made."[30] Yet one of the strengths of Humanities 6, paradoxically enough, is the extent to which its plan is governed by Brower's critical philosophy. His theory, actually quite well-developed and coherent, is of considerable interest both historically and in its own right.

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[28] I am very grateful to Professor Curt Zimansky for a detailed description and analysis of the core courses.

[29] My account of Humanities 6 is based upon these writings, conversations with Professor Brower, and class schedules and teaching materials which he kindly supplied.

In the preface to *The Fields of Light,* Brower handsomely acknowledges that his debt to Richards "appears with the first sentence of the book and is evident on many pages that follow," but also notes that "in taking over terms from *The Principles of Criticism* and other works I have often radically altered their original meanings to fit a quite different point of view."[31] His point of view is like Richards' in conceiving literature as an expression of attitudes, conveyed through using "the full resources of language," but he has purged the system of its doctrinaire positivism and developed some of its secondary aspects in a new way.

Except for a passing comparison between poetic and "technological" language,[32] he makes no use of the fundamental distinction between referential and emotive language. He is silent on the "contextual" theory of the genesis of meaning through recurrent patterns in past experience, but he makes systematic use of context in Richards' other sense of the term, always defining any word as used in its setting, "the words which surround it in the utterance." Unlike Empson, he uses this method to sharpen and clarify meaning, reducing ambiguity by excluding irrelevant associations. Brower also seems to reject the principle of poetic "tension," the dialectical opposition and equilibrium of attitudes or meanings which had been central for most of the New Critics, especially in this country. Richards argued that in the collapse of traditional religious and moral values, poetry was a "perfectly possible means of overcoming chaos." More moderately and convincingly, Brower defends literary study as an instrument of liberal culture, valuable because it gives us practice in finding relationships and making discriminations, which are "among the primary activities of civilized men."[33]

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[30] Reuben A. Brower and Richard Poirier, eds., *In Defense of Reading* (New York, 1962), pp. 12–13.

[31] Reuben A. Brower, *The Fields of Light* (Oxford, Galaxy Books, 1962), p. vii.

[32] *Ibid.*, pp. 9–10. The distinction is one of degree for Brower, since "there are no uses of language or designs that are intrinsically nonpoetic" and technical writing sometimes exhibits a high degree of imaginative organization (pp. 8–9).

There are two major defects in most theories which define literature as a way of using language: by reducing a poem or novel to its verbal meanings, they eliminate action, the essential mimetic or dramatic element, and at the same time preclude any adequate recognition that in literature, as a temporal art, form must be in some sense continuous and sequential, a design unfolding in time. Brower does not entirely avoid these consequences of his Richardsian starting point; in identifying the design of a poem with the "total attitude" it expresses,[34] for example, he has made it static by arresting its motion and progression. But such defects are mitigated or offset to a considerable degree by his habitual attention to dramatic situation, an idea which seems to have been sifted out of Richards' account of the "sign-situation" in emotive speech, along with more specific concepts such as "tone," Richards' third kind of meaning. Whatever its origin, this extraverbal principle allows Brower to take account of character, the changing relationships among characters, the movement of plot, and other mimetic elements. He usually subordinates action ("dramatic design" in his vocabulary) to imagery, metaphor, or some other element of stylistic continuity, but his critical interpretations include excellent discussions of the "curve of the main dramatic sequence" in *Pride and Prejudice*, the "changes in dramatic relationships" that take place in *The Tempest*, and even the "little drama of conversion" in a lyric like Herbert's "Love."[35] I think this kind of understanding might have been reached by a much more direct route with a different theoretical map, but it is a great improvement on the paradox-chopping and irony-mongering of earlier followers of Richards.

For Brower, teaching and criticism are scarcely distinguishable activities. Even in his books on Pope and Frost, where he certainly had things he wanted to say about those poets, he seems to care at least as much about bringing his reader through an interpretive process as he does about establishing any particular critical conclusions. Brower conceives the teacher in his classroom as a critic practicing his craft publicly, in collaboration with his students, and for the specific purpose of increasing their critical powers.[36]

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[33] *Ibid.*, p. xii; see also I. A. Richards, *Science and Poetry* (London, 1926), chs. I, VII.

[34] Brower, *The Fields of Light*, pp. 10, 14, 42, 92.

[35] *Ibid.*, pp. 29, 119, 175.

The academic authorities in Cambridge, Massachusetts, have always been realistic and even hard-boiled in budgetary matters, and there is a good deal of mass education in Harvard College. The enrollment in Humanities 6 is normally limited to 200 students, though it has gone as high as 300, but the course is unique in having two discussion sections a week, meeting in groups of twenty, and only one lecture for which the whole class meets together. The staff consists of Professor Brower, from two to four instructors, lecturers, or assistant professors, and from six to eight teaching fellows. The twice-a-week sections count as a double assignment for the fellows, and no one teaches more than one of them at a time. By the standards prevailing at most universities, the course is generously supported.

The readings assigned in Humanities 6 are as selective as those in "Introduction to Literature in English" at Wisconsin. In 1962–1963 the course began in the first month of the fall semester with an extensive representation of lyric poems from Warren and Erskine's *Six Centuries of Great Poetry* and the *Collected Poems* of Robert Frost, supplemented by some short prose passages on mimeographed sheets, and then moved on to a close study of *Coriolanus* and *Mansfield Park,* with Joyce's *Dubliners* assigned in the two or three weeks without classes at the end of the semester which constitute the Harvard "reading period." In the spring term two weeks were devoted to pastoral poetry, two weeks to *The Winter's Tale,* and a month each for Wordsworth and for *Middlemarch.* The material to be read in the second semester reading period was James' *The Turn of the Screw and Other Short Novels*; in other years Brower has assigned *Paradise*

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[36] Brower and Poirier, *In Defense of Reading,* pp. 4–8.

Lost (six books and passages in four others), Joyce's *Portrait of the Artist*, Thoreau's *Walden*, and *Huckleberry Finn* for independent reading at the end of the first or second semester.

The method of instruction described in "Reading in Slow Motion" and practiced in Humanities 6 is wholly directed toward "fostering a habit of reading well." It is a flexible combination of lectures with discussion in small groups, supplemented by a series of systematically planned written exercises, carefully designed examinations, and judicious use of the reading period. The 1:2 ratio between lectures and sections is significant. Although the lectures are basic, since through them the instructor is able to demonstrate ways of reading which his students can imitate, Brower draws a sharp distinction between "a course that engages the student and one that merely displays the teacher." The lecturer, he says, should always be asking himself: "What is happening to the student? What do I want him to do and how can I get him to do it?" In the sections, of course, there is better opportunity to engage the student, encouraging him to use the concepts and techniques illustrated by the lecturer in active response to the works under discussion.[37]

Almost more important than the formal class meetings, in Brower's view, are the critical essays which he assigns. In the fall semester a series of eight or nine exercises, two to four pages in length, requires the student to apply successively the concepts of speaking voice, imagery, metaphor, sound patterns, and other types of "imaginative design" which Brower illustrates in *The Fields of Light*. An early assignment on Frost's "For Once, Then, Something" may ask for an exact characterization of the voice in which the last four words of the poem ought to be read, as well as the attitude or attitudes which those words express. Some of the later exercises are similar in purpose and subject to the papers assigned by Professor Hoffman at Swarthmore, though Brower's directions are more detailed and specific. The object of an exercise on *Coriolanus*, for example, may be "to interpret a critical moment in the drama by making use of what you have learned about (1) characteristic uses of language, and (2) the structure of the play as a whole." Designating a particular speech by the hero, the directions ask the student to interpret certain words and thematic images, as used here and elsewhere in the play, to relate the assigned passage to specific earlier and later speeches, and to summarize the whole in such a way that the reader will feel "the excitement, the importance, and the larger significance of this moment." In these exercises, in the similar tasks set on the examinations, and in the assignments carried out during the reading period without guidance from the teacher, the students are gently but repeatedly prodded to practice independently the arts of interpretation with which the whole course is concerned.[38]

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[37] *Ibid.*, pp. 7–9.

Yet there is a legitimate and important place for nonaesthetic concerns in Brower's ideal first course, provided only that we come to them through the poetry and without violence to its imaginative integrity. In Humanities 6, with many safeguards to ensure perceptive reading and critical discrimination, Brower is quite willing to show his students, at the proper moment, that literature arises in a social milieu, is imbedded in history, and raises questions of ethical value which impel us ultimately to "move back from literature to life." Several of the exercises described in "Reading in Slow Motion" are designed to give the student practice, at an elementary level, in the empirical definition of genres, the writing of intellectual history, and the comparison of cultural and moral traditions.[39]

In such practices, and in several other ways, Humanities 6 is an epitome of the ideas about teaching, literature, and criticism with which this chapter has been concerned. The course is unusually consistent and explicit in its philosophical commitments, both educational and aesthetic, and it is distinctive in its particular blending of elements. But like the core courses at Iowa, English 33 at Wisconsin, and "The Development of English Literature" at Swarthmore, it is essentially a composite. Its approach to literature is not simple and single but complex, diverse, and flexible; as interpreted in the design and daily operation of the course, "fostering a habit of reading well" is a guiding principle broad enough to encompass not only the poetic uses of language but also the relations of literature to life, history, and culture. The house of literature has many mansions, and in their differing fashions all these courses attempt to do justice to its infinite variety.

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[38] *Ibid.*, pp. 10–15, 16–18.

[39] *Ibid.*, pp. 10, 13, 14, 19–20.

IV

My purpose in this survey has not been to make a case for any particular kind of introductory course. I have tried to describe objectively four representative plans, with enough historical and philosophical background to clarify the issues involved. Each of these courses has its own intelligible and defensible rationale, and all four provide excellent undergraduate instruction. In the main they have been shaped by the same assumptions about both liberal education and literature, their common purpose and common subject matter, and I doubt that any generally convincing arguments could be advanced for judging one of them to be superior in principle to the others.

My own convictions about teaching literature to freshmen and sophomores have gradually shaken down to half a dozen ideas, most of which have been stated or at least suggested earlier in this chapter. Although they have some bearing on almost every aspect of the first course, they are relatively independent of course titles and descriptions and could be followed within the framework of any of the plans which have been discussed here. A brief statement of these ideas is offered here by way of summary.

Choice of readings. In deciding on the writers and works to be assigned for reading, the omission or inclusion of some categories will always be determined by the specific aims and guiding ideas of the particular course. I used to think that teachability was another important consideration; it is a criterion which puts a good deal of weight on comprehensibility and interest for students. The average order of difficulty should no doubt be kept within reason, so that students may have a sense of accomplishment and growing mastery as their understanding increases, but some things ought to be over their heads. They should struggle with one or two works as monumental and resistant as *Paradise Lost*, over which a reconnaissance of several weeks can do little more than trace a few surface paths. I also think that some of the readings should be strange and alien, disturbing to the student's customary habits of thought and feeling. Such challenges will do little good if the works chosen are second-rate or merely freakish; the student must be convinced that the intellectual and imaginative effort is justified by the excellence of the work. Poems and plays, like the products of all the arts, are valuable in themselves, for their own beauty and power. With God's plenty to choose from and time to teach only a small sampling, teachers of a first course in literature are foolish to include anything but the best.

Course design. Coverage of a certain body of writings is a very inadequate aim for a course in literature, and the finest list of readings is only the raw material of instruction. It must be organized in a sequence determined by the larger purposes of the course and the greatest effectiveness in presentation. Though too often laid out with little thought or ingenuity, the design of a course calendar can be a fairly subtle art. Even when the order of presentation is dictated by chronological sequence or some other predetermined principle, the plan should avoid a monotonous regularity of pace. The student should never be allowed to settle into a comfortable rut of expectancy that this week will be like the last; if several class meetings have been devoted to detailed analysis of two or three lyrics each, it is probably time for some larger speculations, comparing and generalizing over a range of examples or a sweep of time. Whether the course is organized historically or on some other principle, the teacher should be sure that he knows where he wants the student to be going, the concepts to be presented and illustrated, the points of summation and changes of direction, the links and cross references that will help to bind the whole sequence together. The plan should also take advantage of opportunities for variety and contrast, and a few well-contrived surprises will certainly do no harm. It is better yet if the teacher himself is surprised by some things that happen. There is an element of the theatrical in all teaching, and a course in literature should have the vividness and interest, the sense of movement and climax, and the firm underlying structure of a good play well-acted.

Standards of interpretation. There may be some justification for the publication of strained and eccentric interpretations in the critical quarterlies, where they are gradually refuted in the course of critical debate, but they surely do not belong in a course for freshmen and sophomores. The work itself should be the standard; it should be treated with respect, and the interpretations offered by the instructor or worked out between him and the class should be sober, responsible, and generally orthodox. There is so much authentic subtlety in masterpieces like *Gulliver's Travels* or the odes of Keats, when they are read naturally, that it is difficult to be patient with implausible and meretricious explications. Such readings may dazzle momentarily, but the end result for students of good sense is likely to be either contempt for the whole subject, as exemplified by the teacher's bizarre way of thinking, or a stultifying skepticism about the possibility of rational and objective judgment in literary study.

The study of literature. Professors of English are usually less vulnerable to a charge of teaching "the special from the special point of view" than some of their colleagues in other departments, but I think they sometimes err on the other side by treating their own field of study as if it were a naked encounter between a reader and a book. A beginning course in physics is not illiberal or overspecialized because it tries to give the student an elementary understanding of scientific method or the philosophy and history of physical research. Although knowledge of literature does not have the rigor and precision that are possible in the exact sciences, humanistic scholarship has its own rationale and systematic procedures, its own tradition of discoveries and achievements. Students should know that an exacting scholarly process lies behind the texts they read, that the explanatory notes in anthologies rest on something more substantial than an arbitrary verdict by the editor. The technical discipline of a graduate seminar in bibliography and methods of research would obviously be out of place in an introductory course, but freshmen and sophomores should be given at least some glimpses of the history of scholarship—brief accounts at appropriate moments of several major personalities and the work they did, occasional summaries of larger tendencies in the interpretation of writers and periods, an exposition of some unresolved issues actively debated among scholars today.

Literary theory. I can't agree with Professor Brower—who probably doesn't quite mean it anyway—that concepts are valuable chiefly in "calling attention to the poem and how it is made." Enjoyment of the individual work of art is primary, but the more we care about literature the more we want to understand it intellectually, to grasp its nature and principles, its kinds and relations. Like any theoretical knowledge, such understanding is valuable not merely instrumentally but for its own sake. Most teachers have an aesthetic and critical point of view of some sort, more or less clearly worked out; the clearer the better, in my opinion. These ideas should be stated and defended, though of course not dogmatically; other possible philosophies should be objectively presented, and the students should be encouraged to explore several different theories and approaches. They should end an introductory course not only with increased skills in reading but with some general ideas about literature and, if possible, with at least the tentative outlines of an aesthetic philosophy of their own.

I believe, finally, that the first course in literature is crucial not only for departments of English but for the whole American system of undergraduate instruction. A course of this kind is almost universally required for the bachelor's degree, in professional as well as liberal curricula. The requirement is a commitment by the whole college to the principle that every educated man or woman must have some knowledge of the humanities; the responsibility for providing it is delegated to the staff of the introductory course or courses. Both from the nature of the task itself and from the number and variety of the students to be taught, it is a difficult and demanding assignment. Such a course should be taught not only well but superbly; it deserves the best efforts of the best teachers, generously supported by college administrators. Chairmen should do battle with their deans for money, time, or other material assistance to strengthen the course and improve its quality. Departments, in turn, should be expected to manage it efficiently and teach it with conviction. Even in large university departments, heavily engaged in research and graduate teaching, mature scholars should continue to work in the first course along with younger teachers. The most gifted members of the faculty are especially needed, not only for the direct benefit to their own students but also for their influence on policies and practices; their advice and example can be invaluable in sustaining the tone and the standard over the years. If the difficulties are many, the rewards are proportionately great; few tasks can be more satisfying to teachers of literature than opening the subject to freshmen and sophomores. But all of this goes without saying among those who care for literature and believe in liberal education—"What nedeth it to sermone of it moore?"

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ROBERT C. POOLEY

General and Interdisciplinary Courses

IN THE EARLY DECADES of this century, a new movement in higher education began to emerge and to be identified as general education. While the label has suffered various indignities and is not always in highest regard today, it is still the best term to describe liberal (i.e., nonvocational) education which stresses the common elements of experience as contrasted with the divisive forces of specialization. In essence a protest movement, general education set out to combat two trends of higher education which it regarded as unsound: the conversion of introductory courses in many subjects, intended for and still required as liberal education, into first-rung courses in the ladder of professional specialization; and the multiplicity of fields, courses, and special programs increasingly tending to partition students from one another at the stage of education which should still be devoted to common learning. These trends, it was felt, led students to have little interest in and small respect for what remained of nonvocational, liberal education. Students tended to "get off" these requirements as worthless obstacles to the real business of becoming vocational experts. Various experiments were undertaken to combat these trends. Those concerned with the humanities will be examined in this chapter.

In 1919, Dr. John Erskine of Columbia College initiated his colloquia on the Great Books; with some modifications this course later became a part of the pattern of general studies until recently offered in Columbia College. One of the earliest comprehensive plans was the Experimental College at the University of Wisconsin, created by Dr. Alexander Meiklejohn in 1928. It submitted students to a year's concentration upon Greek culture, largely through literature and much of it in the original. The second year compared Greek culture with that of the United States in the twentieth century. Although the college lasted only four years, its impact on the concept of general education was extensive. The Harvard Report, *General Education in a Free Society*, 1945, further clarified and enlarged the concepts of general education: "It is proposed that the course in the area of the humanities which will be required of all students be one, which might be called 'Great Texts of Literature.' The aim of such a course would be the fullest understanding of the work read rather than of men or periods represented, craftsmanship evinced, historic or literary development shown, or anything else."[1]

These various developments in general education are largely a reaction against the excessive freedom of the elective system which too often results in early specialization and neglect of those areas which lie outside the student's vocational interest. One answer to this problem has been an increase in the number of required subjects, which compels the humanities student to elect courses in the social studies and in the sciences and the aspiring scientist to choose courses in literature and the social studies. While this method has helped check early specialization, many educators feel that the breadth of material covered is still too narrow. The nonscience student who elects chemistry learns something about chemistry and scientific techniques in general but nothing of the special problems and techniques of the other sciences. Such fundamental matters as heredity, the birth and age of the world, and the nature of electricity and sound may be left untouched by the student who elects chemistry. In an effort to remedy this limitation, one- and two-year integrated courses in

[1] *General Education in a Free Society* (Cambridge, 1945), p. 205.

the sciences have been devised which deal with all branches of science and offer the student at least an inkling of what is taking place in the scientific world in which he lives.

In the humanities a similar situation has existed. A year of English literature generally satisfies the BA requirements, and the nonhumanities student has seldom been exposed to other literatures or to other arts. Here too, integrated programs have been developed. Since the first experimental program in the humanities of the 1920's and 1930's, courses in general literature have increased in such numbers that they must now be recognized as full-fledged members of the family of basic literature courses. They can scarcely be viewed any longer as experimental, but criticism of them tends to persist. It is, of course, impossible to do justice to the whole range of human culture within a year. But this valid criticism can be as easily applied to surveys of both world literature and English literature as to integrated courses in the humanities. Moreover, it is questionable whether a thorough understanding of literary history is, after all, the function of an introductory course in literature aimed primarily at enrichment of experience. In such courses the main purpose of reading *Hamlet* should not be to examine a Renaissance work of art or to recognize its place in English literature, but to present the play with enough understanding and pleasure that the student may wish to turn to *Othello* or *King Lear* and by these experiences find a lifelong source of enjoyment in the reading of Shakespeare.

Incentive has been the governing principle of general education in the humanities. While thorough training in art, music, and literature would be highly desirable, under our present four-year higher educational system with its concurrent demand for specialization, such training can be given to no more than a select few. But because the study of music, literature, or art for all students cannot be as complete as might be wished, it does not follow that no training is preferable to some. American education has not been formed on the philosophy of drink deep or taste not. General education in the humanities has proceeded on the theory that the student should be required to experience at least the best that Western culture has produced in all the arts. If the choice must lie between exposing him briefly to Crashaw and Vaughan or to Michelangelo and Raphael, general education has held for the latter. As the survey of literature justifies itself in the hope that the student who has been required to read *Hamlet* will read *Othello,* the humanities literature course is justified by the hope that not only Shakespeare will be a source of future pleasure, but Molière, Beethoven, and Rembrandt as well.

No satisfactory inclusive name exists for the kinds of courses that have developed, but the loosely drawn headings of world literature courses, integrated courses, and genre courses will cover the new experiments as well as some courses developed within departments of English even before general education was emphasized.

Courses devoted to world literature were being taught in colleges long before the impact of the general education movement, but because they had been designed to meet needs similar to those of general education programs or could easily be adapted to such ends, they have played a prominent part in the advancement of general education goals.

The term *world literature* is not unchallenged. A recent critic has said, ". . . most of us would agree that 'World Literature' is not a happy term."[2] Professor Friederich calls it "a presumptuous and arrogant term. . . . We should refrain from using it."[3] Similar objections can be offered for the terms "Great Books," "General Literature," and "Comparative Arts." But whatever the name, the courses represent a long tradition and a wide acceptance, evidenced in part by a national conference on the teaching of world literature on the campus of the University of Wisconsin in April of 1959, giving rise to the published proceedings cited above. For convenience in this section, the term *World Literature Survey* will be used to describe one type of introductory course and the term *Great Books* another type, even though such a distinction is somewhat arbitrary and, in the light of the variety of specific courses, may be difficult to maintain. One instructor states it thus: "I have been teaching side by side two courses not only somewhat different in basic scope and interest, but also different in approach. The one of much longer standing is a two-course sequence in Great Books in Translation. . . . The second course . . . organized a few years ago . . . is the anthology survey. Teaching this course along with the other . . . stimulates me to ask questions about the comparative values of the two very different attacks, the intensive and the extensive."[4]

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[2] Haskell M. Block, ed., *The Teaching of World Literature,* UNC Studies in Comparative Literature (Chapel Hill, 1960), p. 1.

[3] *Ibid.,* p. 14.

THE GREAT BOOKS COURSE

Professor John Erskine developed at Columbia College in 1919 an honors course for undergraduates designed to introduce them to some of the great works of Western civilization. He used the name Great Books and initiated a pattern which has been widely followed. The distinction between these courses and the survey course is partly in method, what Professor Williams calls the "intensive" as against the "extensive" approaches, but originally there was a distinction in kinds of materials used. In general, the survey confines itself to an anthology of materials which may be narrowly classed as "literature" whereas the Great Books tradition has from the beginning treated individual pieces including works representative of man's thought and discovery as well as of his literary expression. Thus Erskine's list for the nineteenth century contained not only works like *Faust* and *Anna Karenina* but also nonliterary ones like Hegel's *Philosophy of History*, Darwin's *Origin of Species*, and William James' *Psychology*.

What began as reading for enrichment of mind at Columbia developed into a method of education at St. John's College in Maryland. There the curriculum was based upon primary documentary sources for all areas. This was less radical a concept for the humanities whose material is inherently the "great tradition" than for the social studies and sciences whose material is inherently experimental. The St. John's program includes more works in the sciences than appear in Erskine's list, but there is little change in the literary content of the course. For linguistic reasons the great lyric poetry of the nineteenth century is noticeably absent, and the program, in general, contains little poetry, outside the epic.

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[4] Weldon M. Williams, "Intensive and Extensive Approaches in the Teaching of World Literature," in *ibid.*, pp. 73–81.

Although the Erskine model has survived in a fair number of current courses, usually as honors work for advanced students, the tendency has been to make the Great Books course purely literary. The reason for this limitation is probably time and concentration. It is hard enough with literature alone to achieve understanding and appreciation; with materials from many other areas of human experience the task is well-nigh impossible. Although adoption of a thematic scheme of organization or the use of a restricted period of time can make it possible to preserve something of the breadth of Erskine's list, Great Books programs do tend to become chiefly literary because they are taught by literary persons with literary goals.

Still, the concept of the Great Books as forming the basis for a liberal education is well established, and titles and types of organization available to the instructor are almost infinite. Most commonly an introductory year course will use about eight titles a semester, ranging from a book of the Bible (Job, say) down to a major twentieth century work; Homer, Greek tragedy, Plato, Dante, Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Milton will almost certainly be represented. A nondepartmental senior course can include more titles, perhaps twelve a semester, and is not bound to include the very greatest names. Works not primarily literary—by Machiavelli, Jaspers, Jung, to choose examples at random—are more likely to appear, and the course is apt to be organized around a few major concepts. But in any case, if it is to remain a Great Books course, it will be distinguished from other general literature courses by at least three characteristics: (1) the books chosen are almost completely works of high significance in Western culture; (2) they are read entire; (3) the courses usually emphasize social and human values as well as purely literary values.

THE SURVEY COURSE IN WORLD LITERATURE

Probably most common of all omnibus courses is the world literature survey. Something of the sort is to be found in nearly every college catalog, sometimes as an introductory course, sometimes as an upper level undergraduate course. Where there is a separate department of comparative literature, these courses are the introductory offerings. Wherever given they may substitute for, or be optional alternatives to, general English literature courses.

The traditional world literature survey, extending often from earliest known literary documents to Marcel Proust, Thomas Mann, Camus, and Kafka, is quite often based upon an anthology. It is obvious that any such anthology, even in two or more volumes, that offers to cover world literature from Confucius and the Vedic Hymns down to Thomas Mann and T. S. Eliot can contain few selections entire and that most authors will be represented by very short extracts. Probably no instructor will follow such a text slavishly from page to page; yet, since the text is his only resource for content, he must use a large amount of it. Any anthology will have a pattern set by its editors—a good and useful pattern, no doubt, but by no means the only one—by which the instructor will be bound.

These surveys of World Literature on the introductory level usually include such major figures of English literature as Chaucer, Shakespeare, and Milton, together with the great continental writers. When offered on the advanced level (as in junior and senior electives), they are often considered complementary to English literature and exclude the basic English classics. In general, world surveys are arranged chronologically and tend to follow some sort of historical arrangement. The teaching apparatus presents brief historical and intellectual backgrounds of the period to be studied, followed by selections from a large number of the major authors of the period. The obvious teaching advantage of such an arrangement is that it enables the student to view literary works in relation to the age as a whole: the great Greek tragedies, for example, may be examined in the light of both the philosophic theories of Plato and Aristotle and the political temper of the Athenian city-state as expressed in the orations of Pericles.

On the other side, the anthology, apart from not being able to present many major works in full, must limit itself to a single work when several are needed to develop the relationship under consideration. Furthermore, the student may be led by the emphasis on these interrelationships to view the great masterpieces of literature as documents in support of a thesis rather than primarily as works of art. Some selected cantos of Dante or a chunk of Cervantes can hardly make the student acquainted with the content of the works or aware of the scope of the writers. Anthologists are increasingly aware of this defect and present as much as possible in full. But limitations of the survey idea restrict the whole pieces to plays, short stories, and short poems: the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, *Don Quixote*, and the novels of Tolstoy and Dostoevsky must of necessity be excerpted or omitted.

In the attempt to solve this problem by the use of paperback editions of the classics which are read in full, the trend is away from the survey concept and in the direction of the Great Books course. For mature teachers this trend is perhaps for the best. Inasmuch as these introductory surveys often have of necessity to be entrusted to young, inexperienced teachers, there is much to be said in defense of the anthology with clear organization and convenient critical introductions.

The ideal of the World Literature course has been well stated by Professor Walter R. Agard in his paper at the Conference on the Teaching of World Literature, in which he asserted that "teaching the classics in translation (as of any other literature) will be judged by two criteria: does it arouse the interest of students and develop their critical judgment; and does it lead them to continue such reading, appraisal, and appreciation, the rest of their lives? If so, in a world of events which they must find perplexing, not to say terrifying, this world of literature can help them gain increased understanding of life and win, let us hope, some measure of happiness."[5]

INTEGRATED COURSES

The variety of content, organization, and utilization of staff in the so-called humanities courses or integrated courses is so wide as to defy formal classification. Some such courses combine composition with literature; others include philosophy, the history of ideas, or history proper; and a very large group attempts to bring together the arts as experience, literature being treated usually as the chief art. The distinguishing characteristic of an integrated course is that it combines literature with one or more of the other humanistic disciplines. This integration may be entrusted to a single instructor or to a team of instructors, each of whom contributes his specialty to the whole.

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[5] Walter R. Agard, "Teaching the Classics in Translation," in *ibid.*, p. 34.

Some integrated courses are closely adjusted to a larger curriculum with relating courses in the social studies and the sciences; more are humanities courses which are either alternatives to or replacements for the more traditional introductory courses in literature. The actual scope of the humanities is hard to define because human interest and awareness are enhanced by all sorts of experience, whether literary, philosophical, aesthetic, societal, or scientific. Nevertheless, for the purposes of instruction, a general area called the humanities has been roughly staked out in which are included languages, literature, philosophy, culture, history, and the fine arts. These have in common their concern with values arising from experience rather than with the data of experience themselves. The center of this body of material is pretty well agreed upon but the edges are fuzzy. The best test of a particular course is intent. If the goals of the course are clearly directed to values to be gleaned from specifics, the course is a humanities course; if the goal is the assimilation of facts, it is not a humanities course. A course titled "Western Civilization" might be either. Courses titled "Culture" or "Integrated Arts" generally qualify as humanities if their intent is the discovery and analysis of values.

Despite their variety, the goals of such courses are similar. They include enlargement of the student's intellectual horizon, raising of his level of taste, and development of significance in specific experience by the interrelationship of the several arts and a grasp of their common problems. One commentator at a national meeting stated the goals in these terms:

> . . . the general education courses in the humanities should not be designed to make painters, writers, composers, or sculptors of our students. They should have two purposes: first, to teach our students how to understand works of art in all fields, to go below the surface to

symbol and beneath symbol to the varied meanings and truths; and second, to give our students many of the aesthetic experiences which artists of the past and present have uncovered. These, I believe, are the goals of the humanities in general education.[6]

Perhaps the best summary of the integrated course may be found in the aesthetic principles enunciated by the faculty of Boston University College of Basic Studies:

1. All works of art are artificial constructs dependent for understanding upon the fact that they are expressed in a symbolic language.
2. All works of art are enriched in meaning when they are understood as related to the historical, cultural, or traditional context in which they were created.
3. The significance of a work of art is in no way dependent upon the informative data imparted by it, but rather depends for its significance on the artist's ability to transcend the limits of his time and relate to the universal aspects of man's experience.
4. Understanding a work of art is in great measure a matter of awareness, awareness of the possible choices among the languages, media, skills, and technique of a given civilization and its given view of art.[7]

It would be fantastic to assert that all teachers of integrated courses would agree with this statement of principles; but by and large, implicitly and explicitly present, these principles are rather general to integrated courses and come as close to constituting an organizational platform as any other generalized statement.

One such course is the University of Colorado's "Introduction to the Humanities," a year course integrating literature, philosophy, music, and the fine arts in Western civilization from the Greeks to the present. For students it is one way—and certainly not the easiest—to fulfill the requirement of the College of Arts and Sciences in the area of literature and the humanities. The course proceeds chronologically, based upon the assumption that the works studied concurrently are related in time and style;

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[6] Neal Cross, "A Critical Analysis of the Humanities in General Education," in *General Education at Mid-Century* (Tallahassee, 1950), p. 64.

[7] "The Humanities Program at Boston University College of Basic Studies," in James A. Fisher, ed., *The Humanities in General Education* (Dubuque, 1960), p. 26.

emphasis is not upon survey or history of ideas, but rather upon selected creative works as they express man's varied responses to and interpretations of his life and his world. For example, a one-month segment of the course contains (1) under art, Baroque painting and architecture, Watteau and rococo, Hogarth, and Goya; (2) under music, Corelli, Couperin, Rameau, and Mozart; and (3) under literature, Descartes, Molière, and Pope. The art and music material is presented in large lecture groups (3 hours a week) while literature and the relationships between the various parts of the course are taken up in small discussion groups (4 hours a week). The use of lectures for art and music is almost a necessity, but obviously the burden of the course falls upon the discussion leaders. These have been recruited from the departments of English, classics, philosophy, speech—even from the library—and the principal limitation on the size of the course is the number of teachers able and willing to work in a closely coordinated course completely outside any departmental structure.

More comprehensive is the two-year program in humanities at San Jose State College in California, which satisfies not only the customary area requirement in humanities but also that in the social sciences, including state requirements in American constitution. In its first year the course moves in six chronologically arranged units from Greek life through the Enlightenment. The second year carries through from the classical economists and the age of revolution down to the present. Any brief summary of this extensive course is likely to put too much emphasis on chronological arrangement, whereas a reading list would show the strong emphasis on philosophy and on political and economic theory but would not indicate adequately the importance of art, architecture, and music in the course.

While the San Jose two-year course is very broadly based, it remains a sequence concomitant with other studies but not directly related to them. In the Program of Integrated Liberal Studies of the University of Wisconsin, the humanities courses are one element in a two-year total pattern of integrated studies. In such a pattern some elements, like the rise of the sciences and the development of social and political theory, can be omitted from the humanities program inasmuch as they find their place in parallel courses in the sciences and social studies. "Omitted" is of course too strong, since no integrated course in the humanities can completely ignore the impact of science upon literature, philosophy, and religion, nor can political theory be divorced from the thought of particular periods of time.

In an integrated pattern, the relevance of parallel or concomitant content can be pointed up by cross reference from one course to another. The Wisconsin program embraces the following courses, taken by all students and usually in the first two years (the humanities course is listed first in each semester):

Semester I	*Semester II*
Greek and Roman Culture	Medieval and Renaissance Culture
Early Man and His Society	Transition to Industrial Society
The Physical Universe	Earth Science
The Art of Writing	Nature and Function of Language

Semester III	*Semester IV*
European Culture: 1750–1850	Modern American Culture
Industrial Society: U.S.A.	The International Scene
Biology	Biology

The four-semester sequence of humanities courses is built upon a "block and gap" organization; in other words, certain periods of time are given thorough treatment, with no effort to fill the gaps between. Such a plan results in startling omissions, but it has the virtue of teaching well what is included, avoiding the hasty skimming of survey courses. Of the courses in the humanities sequence, the first is taught by professors of classics, the second by a historian, the third and fourth by professors of English; in all four courses there are lectures and demonstrations in the graphic arts and, where appropriate, recitals with lectures on the music of the periods. But the emphasis is chiefly upon ideas and upon literature as the principal vehicle of ideas.

Professor Russell Thomas of the College of the University of Chicago takes exception to the chronological and thematic presentations of materials in integrated humanities courses, arguing that in both these approaches to the arts "the center of interest lies outside the work itself . . . in the past which they illuminate or the truth which they may be thought to express." As an alternative to these principles of organization, the pattern of humanities courses in the Chicago integrated program emphasizes form, function, and the development of critical principles, the aim being to view the work of art not as a product of, nor a means of access to the culture of which it is a part, but rather as "a kind of created thing designed for certain ends." Where this criterion of organization is rigorously enforced, there would seem to be no integration. The purpose of the integrated course is to provide significance to materials by means of the synoptic view of the humanities. When all experience except aesthetic is removed, the integration is narrowed to the point of disappearance. Even though the literature studied covers a wider range of types, the goals announced at Chicago more closely resemble those of genre courses.

GENRE COURSES

Many of the courses currently offered in English departments are best described as genre courses. Such organization is frequent enough in courses dealing entirely with English literature, American literature, or a combination of the two. In this section only those courses are considered which use some literature in translation. They may be divided into two general categories: (1) introductory courses built around two or more literary types and (2) advanced courses which treat a single literary type.

The general introduction to literature deemphasizes historical background, seeking by close attention to the text to cultivate skill in reading and sensitivity to literary values. These goals are, of course, not unique to this type of course. The point is that the means toward their accomplishment is the close study of a very few literary types. A typical course may be listed as "Introduction to Literature: Drama and Novel." The drama content usually begins with Greek plays and continues through Shakespeare and Molière to Shaw. The novels include selections from the best-known works of Fielding, Austen, Dickens, Thackeray, Tolstoi, Dostoyevsky, Camus, and Kafka. A similar organization deals with the epic (the *Iliad*, the *Odyssey*, the *Aeneid*, the *Divine*

Comedy, and *Paradise Lost*) followed by the novel. Such courses are taught to develop critical intellectual activity about literary problems; to arouse the students' ability to express a coherent critical appreciation of the content rather than to be merely familiar with the details; not so much to impart information and opinion as to awaken a more mature and articulate awareness of the qualities of the work studied. Too well known to meet more than passing notice are the single genre courses labelled "The Novel," "The Short Story," "The Epic," "Drama," and "Lyric Poetry." Usually offered above the introductory level, their purpose is similar to that for the introductory courses, with the advantage of greater depth and concentration. Unless specifically limited by title, e.g., "The British Novel," "The American Short Story," such courses draw their materials from the great literature of the world, using selections from the classics and from European sources in translation in all the genres other than lyric poetry.

For very obvious reasons there are few courses in lyric poetry using multilingual sources. No one is very happy about the translation of a poem from one language to another; even those from the classics are tinted by their translators, and in modern works the transfer of the language of poetry is even more difficult. There are some courses of modern poetry which use a few poems in translation, introduced for comparison with specific English or American poems. Poetry in translation is used extensively in World Literature Survey courses, but these poems are introduced as contributions from specific places and times and are not studied as examples of a genre.

Of growing interest in departments of English are the poetry courses of folk literature. Usually regional in emphasis, such courses permit comparative study of folk lyric and folk balladry of various times and places. The ever growing collection of such materials from the American scene in the Library of Congress furnishes a source of materials. One such course, offered as an elective to seniors, is described as "a comparative study of narrative folksong, with primary emphasis on American and British ballads and a secondary emphasis on the ballads of other cultures found in the Southwest, such as the Texas-Mexican *corrida*."

Other balladries (Spanish, Russian, Danish) are touched upon. The patterns and themes of the ballad in different cultures are analyzed and compared to other forms of folklore. Other courses utilize prose materials of the "tall story" variety, including the widely known Pecos Bill yarns, the Paul Bunyan legends, and other regional sources.

GOALS AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The evidence is overwhelming that the English department of all large universities as well as of many liberal arts colleges has become in fact the department of literature for undergraduate students and to a considerable degree the focus of the humanities. In practical terms this means that the English department has assumed by intention or by circumstance an enlarged responsibility. To its traditional tasks have now been added comparative literature (or at least courses including literature in translation) and humanities. This expansion, not fully comprehended by all professors of English, calls for adjustments in departmental policy, in the recruitment of personnel, in the types and forms of instruction, and in the graduate program of college teacher preparation. By choice or of necessity most English departments today are colleges of the humanities in miniature, offering an enriched curriculum. This breadth of opportunity and responsibility is not always fully recognized and appreciated. While the corpus of English literature from Chaucer to Hardy will remain an important section of the English field, it can no longer be looked upon as the *raison d'être* of the department. The English department is now the purveyor of Western culture to the great mass of undergraduate students. Some of the problems raised by this extended task are discussed below.

First of all, it is not entirely a new task. The goals of general education can be met not only by unorthodox, multinational, or interdisciplinary courses, even though many of these courses did arise in the wake of the general education movement. These demands can also be met by courses in English and American literature when these are planned and taught with the liberal aim of enlarging the mind. Indeed, many of the most traditional courses in English departments can be classified as humanities: "The Seventeenth Century," "Shakespeare," and "The Age of Johnson" are integrated courses that combine elements of history, philosophy, social movements, and aesthetics with literary texts. In the development of offerings beyond literature written originally in English, and with materials from humanities sources outside of literature, the English department is emphasizing its responsibility toward literature as a great art on the one hand and as a leading source of human values on the other.

With the old courses as well as the new, the English department has a two-fold responsibility. One responsibility is to develop "close reading," to provide experience with, and develop skill in, minute analysis of the works of the literary masters of their own language. This has been and should continue to be the fundamental task of the department of English, and for majors and graduate students the chief emphasis. But the second responsibility is equally important, to provide "reading for coverage," that is, acquaintance with and comparative study of as wide a spectrum of all sorts of writing as they have time and energy to undertake. For the general student who will not major in English, this responsibility is at least of equal rank with that of "close reading." Confusion regarding these two parallel tasks creates the criticisms made of the newer courses.

The cry of superficiality is often heard in connection with the interdisciplinary and world literature courses. There are undoubtedly some survey courses still taught under an unhappy spirit of "coverage" which rush breathlessly through twenty-five centuries of literature from all the major cultures of the world in a sequence of two semesters, so that the student experiences but a fragment of the work of any one author and reads almost no work as a whole. There are integrated courses which attempt so great and scattered a concatenation of content from literature, history, philosophy, and the arts as to raise a serious question concerning the values conveyed to the student in any reputable sense of the word "discipline." In these excesses of zeal there is just ground for complaint.

A review of the syllabi of courses will reveal, however, that very few indeed of the world literature, Great Books, integrated, and humanities courses now offered in such great numbers contain these defects. There is, indeed, a steady movement away from fragments to wholes in survey courses. Integrated courses tend to contain less in quantity to achieve a higher degree of significant relationship in what is utilized. These courses, taught by professors of English in the departments of English, are no more "superficial" than is any undergraduate course in English and American literature, which must likewise pick and choose material. Furthermore, traditional courses are always to some degree "integrated." Perhaps what is overlooked by some critics of the "general" courses is that the superficialities of the "specialized" courses are screened by convention.

If the responsibility of the English department were confined to "close reading," the question of literature in translation would scarcely arise. But across the country the two-fold responsibility is increasingly recognized, yet not without strong opposition in some quarters. To these objectors it is perhaps not irrelevant to point out that the single work which has most profoundly affected English in language and literature is a classic in translation, the English Bible of 1611. One could continue with the observation that the translation of the great classics of Greek and Latin into English has occupied the talents and the energies of some of the greatest literary minds of England and America. Surely our culture would be robbed of much treasure were the Bible to be read only in Hebrew, Greek, and Latin, and were the *Iliad, Odyssey,* and *Aeneid* to be available only to those who can read fluently in Greek and Latin. It is scarcely necessary to carry the point on to Molière, Balzac, Ibsen, and Dostoevsky. What professor of English can claim to have read the chief of the works of the non-English tradition in their original languages only? In light of these considerations, it is surprising to find criticism of general literature courses on the grounds that some of the works are read in translation. At least one large institution will not accept as basic literature experience in the required courses any literature except that written in English, nor will it permit a major in English to count toward the major courses whose content includes works in translation. It goes without saying that the general education of any American student should include the reading and critical study of the great works in prose and poetry of his own language. But with safeguards granted, the prohibition of any experience in courses with literature in translation is to deny the student access to an important segment of the sources of his cultural milieu. It is reassuring to note in the course offerings of English departments throughout the United States that this prohibition seems headed toward extinction.[8]

An unsolved and perhaps insoluble problem in the teaching of literature is whether a particular work is best studied and most completely understood in the context of its place in history (with all the biographical, historical, philosophical, political, and social elements included) or as a self-contained, independent work itself. This dichotomy of approach has been clearly seen in the courses described in this chapter. Almost all world literature courses and a few genre courses are planned and taught historically. The works themselves are arranged chronologically, and they are treated as parts of a grand continuity of human experience of which they are both product and exemplar. The emphasis in these courses is upon looking at literature in an evolutionary, developmental way as part of a tapestry woven by time in which it is an important but not supreme portion of the total pattern. When carried to excess, the historical approach can reduce works of literature to contributory bits of evidence in support of aesthetic, philosophic, or social hypotheses. Some courses go to this extreme, but very few.

In contrast, nearly all genre courses, some integrated courses, a few Great Books courses, and very few world literature courses are organized on the principle of the self-sufficiency of the work itself. Professor Thomas states this view concisely:

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[8] For an interesting discussion of this problem see Ralph Freedman, "Correlating the Teaching of Literature in Translation," in Block, *op. cit.*, pp. 109–119. An earlier paper in the same volume, Werner P. Friederich, "On the Integrity of Our Planning," (p. 22) makes an important plea: ". . . We are—not only the leader of the free world, politically, and I hope, slowly also culturally—but we are also the Land of the Middle. And we, assembled here in this center of learning of the American Midwest, have a very important task assigned to us indeed: That of making American youth become aware of this throbbing and fascinating interplay with the rest of the world, and of making our students approach the best in the literary culture of our friends with respect and gratitude."

> We agreed that we could not do justice to the artistic achievements of men if we neglected any one of the three great media of creative expression: music, the visual forms, and literature. We agree, too, that in each course and at all times *the particular work of art ought to be the principal object of study.* (Italics mine)
>
> Our aim, therefore, was to develop as large an experience of products of the various arts of mankind as time allowed us and to cultivate the understanding and the exercise of the disciplines which lead to an intelligent and cultivated appreciation of works of art, as *works of art,* and not as documentary evidence of political and social theory or of natural history.[9]

This point of view is consistent with the prevailing critical theories which subordinate the developmental aspects of any work of art to its self-contained sufficiency as a thing-in-itself. Introductory courses presenting several genres incline toward this approach, the aim being to bring the student to read, understand, and appreciate each work as an object of creative art complete and satisfying in itself.

The case for the historical approach is put very well by Professor Bartlett of the Massachusetts Institute of Technology:

> The primary objective is understanding of the human being's relation to religion, society, politics, and science. The continual search is for self-knowledge through a close examination of what men of great intellectual power have said about human beings and the range of possibilities inherent in human existence. Through an examination of the bases on which men make and have made responsible moral, philosophical, historical, and aesthetic judgments, the student develops some awareness of his potentialities and limitations. By examining ideas in action at particularly significant periods in men's history he enlarges his perspective and increases his understanding of some of the forces which have created the society in which his life and personality are being shaped.[10]

These contrasting expressions of purpose are not extreme and obviously state convictions sincerely believed and followed. The same statements of purpose could be written for conventional courses in English and American literature. The essential difference between the two approaches to a work of art is itself an evidence of a profound truth about the humanities which may be recognized but not reconciled. The warning to sound is that one's own convictions about the values of the two approaches must not be permitted to cloud the significance and worth of a particular course based upon one or the other.

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[9] Russell Thomas, "Humanities in the University of Chicago," in Fisher, *op. cit.*, p. 128.

[10] Howard R. Bartlett, "Humanities in General Education at Massachusetts Institute of Technology," in *ibid.*, p. 174.

Unlike the traditional courses of English departments, which incline to be reasonably similar from one institution to the next, the newer courses present such a variety of content and organization as to make classification very difficult. There is no canon of their content and no agreement on nomenclature. Such variety is not necessarily weakness in organization and content; freshness, breadth, and enthusiasm are excellent antidotes to complacency. Nor has this scope and variety of new courses been achieved at the expense of the traditional offerings. One is led to conclude that departments of English, facing increasing numbers of students and ever widening responsibilities in the teaching of literature, have effectively met the challenge by creating courses in response to broader needs. The result is the dualism noted above: traditional courses drawing upon English and American literature, and humanities courses of interlingual and interdisciplinary content.

Such dualism is a source of minor problems. The student who has taken "Eighteenth Century Literature" in one college may readily be credited with it in another to which he transfers. But the student who presents a transcript reading "Values in the Contemporary World" is not so easily credited. Is this a course in philosophy, literature, or social problems? The inquirer is forced to investigate who taught the course and what readings were used. Assuming that it is a course in literature, may it be offered to meet the general requirement of a year (six credits) of literature? How much literature must a course have to be properly labelled "literature"? These minor queries point to a general question concerning the newer courses: what is meant by "the humanities" and what is the place of literature in this area?

Except for the genre courses, which for the most part reflect the particular interest and competences of their instructors, the humanities courses demand of instructors a breadth of view, a versatility of talent, and a warmth of humanity not frequently combined in the same person. This statement does not mean that general courses can be taught only by a superior kind of superteacher. It does mean that many highly gifted scholars and teachers do not possess the combination of qualities needed for general courses and are unhappy and unsuccessful in them. In recruiting staff, departments must be aware of the peculiar needs of the general courses and diligently seek for teachers gifted in this type of instruction.

How should teachers of general courses be trained and prepared? This question awakened a published symposium in 1957. Two participants urged a new kind of training at the graduate school level for teachers of general, introductory courses. One of them used these points:

> . . . the methods now in use in the American graduate schools to educate scholars and teachers are wrong from the start. The present methods emphasize the accumulation of knowledge at the expense of the enjoyment of learning. . . .
>
> My plea then is for a free curriculum planned on the basis of the talents and interests of the graduate students; for an intellectual atmosphere in which undergraduate teaching and graduate school study are joined together as two aspects of one central process in the development of the scholar-teacher; for the acceptance of the idea that the preparation of the teacher begins in his absorption of the values and content of the liberal arts curriculum; for the idea that to understand children and young adults by teaching them the liberal arts is to deepen one's understanding of the liberal arts themselves.[11]

One of the two rejoinders stated:

> . . . I shall select staff for general education courses from among the PhD graduates of specific departmental programs. . . . The preferred candidate will show in his record well-distributed general education, plus a soundly based major. . . .
>
> A candidate so trained has an academic "home." For sound growth in the academic field a young teacher particularly needs the stimulus

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[11] Harold Taylor, "Graduate Preparation of Teachers of General Education—A Controversy," *College and University Bulletin*, Association for Higher Education, *9*, 11 (March 15, 1957), 1, 2.

> provided by the recognition and approval of his subject area colleagues. To be detached from them tends to make him insecure or aggressively independent. In time such a separation can lead to intellectual sterility. If general education is to interest and retain the best minds in its teaching, it must not isolate the trained scholar from close association with his fellows.[12]

From the catalogs it appears that the vast majority of those teaching the humanities courses in their various kinds, including the integrated courses, are trained in specific disciplines (almost exclusively in English in the courses here considered). The present structure of graduate schools indicates a continuation of this source of teachers for general courses for some time to come. Whether or not teachers so trained make "the best" teachers of general courses is not easy to determine. What seems to be experienced on many campuses is that this method is not turning out enough scholar-teachers with the desirable combination of abilities, attitudes, and interests to supply the demand for instructors in the broad general courses. Departments of English could be more actively aware of this shortage to the point of encouraging suitable candidates to prepare by course work and thesis problems to design and teach general courses, not in isolation but in conjunction with specific scholarly competence in one recognized area.

Syracuse University may be cited as one institution with a graduate program for teachers in the humanities. An optional doctorate is offered by combined agreement of the departments of English, fine arts, philosophy, classics, religion, history, Slavic, Germanic, and Romance languages in a plan described as "The Humanities Program for the Preparation of College Teachers." The purpose is to turn out broadly educated teachers for the traditional departments and for interdepartmental teaching. Only candidates of mature and decisive interests are selected for this pattern, in which they must prepare to face five examination fields, two fields in the main department, and three fields from two other departments. The customary requirement of two foreign languages is maintained, but in addition all candidates must take a seminar entitled "The Humanities in America." The dissertation subject and its manner of development will reflect the integration of interests of the candidate.

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[12] Robert C. Pooley, in *ibid.*, p. 3.

Whether many other of these programs will be developed, and whether the graduates of them in the long run turn out to be "better" teachers of general courses only time and experience can reveal. The fact to stress is that right now more teachers are required for the humanities courses and other general courses, and that departments of English should be aware of this need and be willing to direct programs of graduate study turning out such teachers.

The intent of this chapter has been to focus attention upon the changing role of the department of English in the modern liberal arts college. It is a principal role, providing great opportunity for the department with accompanying great responsibility. Just as the range of kinds of courses has greatly expanded in recent years, so must the vision of English faculties expand to a synoptic view of literature itself as a major part of Western culture. Without a loss of that core of English and American literature which has been the historic responsibility of our departments, we must now be prepared to develop, staff, and administer courses which bring the great literature of the classics and modern foreign cultures into its place as a part of the liberal education of the nonmajor student; even further, we must be prepared for courses in humanities that extend beyond literature into history, philosophy, and the arts.

To carry out such a program, departments of English will need to develop:

a. a sound philosophy of general education to guide the department's efforts in meeting its responsibilities to the general undergraduate college.

b. a division of courses into those which offer wide ranges of material for cultural background and those which offer "reading in depth" to develop taste and specific literary skills.

c. a recognition of the multiple functions of the modern department of English, with resultant sound policies in breadth and range of curriculum, the recruitment of able staff for the newer as well as the older responsibilities of the department, and a new sense of responsibility in the training of teachers for courses of general cultural content in literature as well as for teachers of the traditional courses.

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ROBERT M. GORRELL

Freshman Composition

FRESHMAN ENGLISH HAS BECOME an institution in American college education. Business and professional men look at the misspellings of their secretaries or the infelicities in the prose of bar examinations and ask that more composition and rhetoric be taught—or at least that the results be better. Critics of the jargon of advertising copy, of cliché-ridden journalism, or of bloated political prose fortify faith in the composition requirement. The semilettered especially are likely to think of the course, mistakenly, as a bulwark against the onslaughts of the split infinitive or the final preposition. University administrators approve the course as a logical introduction to higher education —a course that provides the tools of learning—thinking, reading, writing. Taught mainly by graduate assistants and instructors, it is also a highly economical way of providing a fifth of every student's first year of instruction. Professors of physics or engineering or economics hope that the course will teach their students to read textbooks, to produce logical examination papers, to write technical reports. For them the course has the added advantage of relieving them of responsibility for directing reading or policing writing. For professors of English the course has similar attractions, justifying more attention in upper division courses to literary history and criticism and providing financial means for populating graduate courses. Parents accept freshman English partly because they had to take it themselves but also because the first letter home is likely to dramatize a need. Even students, who grumble readily about requirements, are likely to be resigned to freshman English. They cannot remember not having had to take English—every year of their education.

Increased recognition of the importance of communication in modern society has strengthened approval for a course dedicated to producing accurate readers and graceful writers. Increased specialization, furthermore, particularly in the sciences, has stimulated a resurgence of approval for humanistic studies—especially if they do not interfere with the specialization—and freshman English gains additional supporters who hope the course will produce cultured as well as literate sophomores. In a sense, freshman English is popularly regarded as a kind of capsule liberal education, a way of filling the gaps that appear as specialization increases. The course is accepted and required with the hope that it will work not one but a series of major miracles: that it will change the language habits of many students so that they will become adept in the dialect of standard English, that it will produce students who have ideas, can find facts to develop them, and can organize and present material clearly and persuasively, that it will train students to read expository prose rapidly and accurately and also to appreciate and interpret literature, that it will make students think clearly and logically, and so on. Obviously this is a great deal to expect from a single two-semester course.

The amazing thing is that the course, with all its limitless scope, has so often been successful. Wise and sympathetic teachers, partly perhaps because of the loftiness of the goals, have achieved a great measure of success in teaching freshman English. Students often testify, as they look back, that their freshman English course first brought their minds to life, revealed to them something of the mysteries of how language works, awakened insights into poetry or drama. Because freshman English classes are still relatively small in most institutions, the instructor often is able to provide individual help for the student; he often becomes counselor as well as teacher, just because he is less remote than the lecturer in the large introductory courses. Often students even learn to write better.

There is an uneasy suspicion among those who teach freshman English that much of this success occurs in spite of rather than because of the organization and content of the course. Particularly in recent years directors and teachers of freshman English have been subjecting themselves to self-analysis and self-castigation. They have discovered paradoxes and contradictions at every turn.

To begin with, the course which by label is most nearly universal in American higher education—and which is readily transferred from one school to another—is far from standard in content. Whereas beginning chemistry or even elementary political science is likely to be similar from one institution to another, freshman English varies significantly, not only from campus to campus but often from section to section within one department. There are a few predictable ingredients in almost every version of the course, but so much subject matter is available and so many goals are admirable that almost anything can happen. At one extreme, the course may center on a kind of broad orientation to problems close to the life of the beginning college student, on the defensible premise that the most important need is to get the student excited about something so that he is stimulated to write about it. One course, for instance, begins with a study of university government, with the students doing various kinds of observing and reading about it and then writing about it, presumably with both knowledge and enthusiasm. It proceeds to studies of city government, state government, and so on. At another extreme the course may be two semesters of workbook drill on usage, with varying amounts of reading and theme writing included to spice the diet and test the student's progress in distinguishing *lie* from *lay* or *infer* from *imply*. It may be mainly a course in general semantics, with exercises in distinguishing fact from judgment or analyzing television advertisements. It may center on a study of informal logic, with practice in manipulating the syllogism or exploring methods of definition. It may concentrate on the study of language, approached historically, through structural linguistics or through traditional grammar. It is commonly based on some kind of rhetorical approach, varying from routine exercises on the forms of discourse to exploration of techniques of analysis, organization, and development, usually based on collections of illustrative essays. It may be organized about a collection of prose readings on a variety of subjects arranged by themes, often selected to provoke controversy in class discussion and hence produce topics for student themes. It may be mainly an introduction to literature, including a substantial amount of writing on the works studied. It may include study of the dictionary, methods of using the library, techniques of the research paper, problems in letter writing, methods of writing an examination, or problems of choosing a vocation.

In practice most freshman English courses combine a number of these emphases. In a recent study of freshman English, Professor Albert R. Kitzhaber found that the most common pattern combines rhetoric and an introduction to literature.[1] A first semester is based on a handbook and a collection of essays with emphasis on writing practice that grows from discussions of the essays; a second semester centers on an anthology of different types of literature with writing assignments involving some kind of literary criticism. Next in popularity seems to be the course organized about a series of topics, provocative because they relate to the student's interests or stimulate his imagination or present conflicting opinions on current problems. Essays and sometimes poems and stories, classified in anthologies to illustrate these topics, become the focus for the course. The readings provide materials for class discussion and practice in precise reading. Topics for writing grow from the class discussions. Student papers are criticized, often on the basis of a handbook used in the class for reference and for some assignments.

Textbooks designed for the course—probably constituting the biggest and most profitable and most competitive single enterprise of college textbook publishers—both reflect and dictate the nature of the course. The so-called handbooks, perhaps, come nearest to being fixtures. They vary in size and scope and attitude, from brief outlines of troublesome usage problems to extensive compilations of advice on rhetoric, logic, grammar, and usage. Many of them are essentially prescriptions preserving the spirit—sometimes even the letter—of popular eighteenth century grammars like those of Robert Lowth or Lindley Murray. Others have made notable efforts to adapt the findings of modern linguistics to the classroom. Almost all of these provide some kind of machinery to aid the teacher in marking themes and the student in correcting them. Half a dozen or so of these have stayed alive, with revision every five or six years, for thirty or forty years. Two or three new ones appear each year, with most of each crop destined for a short life. Often designed to supplement the handbooks are workbooks, collections of exercises with varying amounts of explanation. Designed for quick grading, they usually provide tear-out sheets for short answers and typically emphasize drill on usage. Some of the most recent of these are programed, or organized intricately for progressive learning and self-teaching. Most numerous and most ephemeral of the freshman English texts are the collections of readings. Almost every publisher introduces at least one new one each year; few ever reach a second edition. Of these collections the omnibus variety seems to exhibit the greatest vitality; a few of these thick volumes of essays, biography, history, poems, plays, stories, and occasionally a novel have lived through many editions. Their versatility is probably responsible for their popularity; they can be adapted to almost any sort of course and can be made to satisfy almost any instructor's particular interests. Other kinds of collections are limited by some principle of selection. Some classify examples of prose according to theme or subject matter, often choosing themes presumably close to the main interests of the student. The readings are often designed for use as models for student writing. Sometimes they are arranged to illustrate rhetorical principles. A number of kinds of specialized texts are also directed to the freshman course with a particular emphasis—introductions to semantics, logic, grammar, or language. Increasing enrollments in the 1950's stimulated enthusiasm for collections of material suitable for "controlled" or "guided" research, on a historical event, a social problem, a literary work, or a topic in literary history. One popular type of text offers a "complete course," combining readings, rhetorical advice, and a handbook.

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[1] Albert R. Kitzhaber, *Themes, Theories, and Therapy* (New York, 1963), pp. 22–23.

To some extent textbooks reveal national trends in subject matter for freshman English. Most obvious is the reflection of the general concern since World War II for study in linguistics. Handbooks are beginning to show awareness of new attitudes toward grammar and usage, and more specialized collections of readings in linguistics have been appearing recently with remarkable frequency. Similarly, the beginnings of a revival of rhetoric seem reflected in the recent popularity of the word *rhetoric* in titles and in the appearance of a number of rhetorically organized readers. On the other hand, textbooks certainly are a major force for stability—sometimes ossification—in the freshman course. Publishers have shown, in general, rather remarkable willingness to try new sorts of textbooks; but the most widely used texts are still those most sparing of innovation, most strongly wedded to prescriptive grammar and to readings which have become familiar by appearances in collection after collection.

As college enrollments have increased, administration of the almost universally required freshman course has become increasingly complex. A director of freshman English is an accepted administrative officer in most institutions of any size, and he is usually busy. The IBM machines have not removed all problems of getting some thousands of beginning students registered into appropriate classes in suitable classrooms with teachers in front of them. In the first place, a conviction has persisted that one essential of the course is regular writing criticized by an instructor. As a result, and also because the course is traditionally considered a last stronghold of relatively intimate student-teacher discussion, efforts to keep classes as small as possible have continued. Large institutions often have hundreds of sections of the course. Although in many schools each teacher chooses his own favorite textbooks and organizes the course as he wishes—sometimes working from a list of required topics—a departmental syllabus frequently regulates the course and prepares students for a mass departmental examination at the end.

The students required to take the course, however, vary greatly in background and ability. In an effort to make the punishment fit the crime, most colleges test entering students and attempt to provide variations on the course to fit variations in preparation. Of these the remedial course has been one of the most common, though it is now being dropped by many of the major schools. It is organized in various ways. Normally students who cannot demonstrate a minimum level of proficiency on the entrance test are required to pass a noncredit remedial course—"bonehead English" in student slang. Some junior colleges conduct two or even three levels of this kind of precollege English. Sometimes such a course carries credit, but students are required to take additional hours to qualify for a degree. Sometimes additional hours of drill on usage are provided as a supplement to the regular course, or the student is required to report to a writing "laboratory" until he can perform satisfactorily. Superior students also often receive special treatment; they may be exempted from the requirement entirely, or they may be assigned to an accelerated program, or they may be allowed to substitute a special honors course or a more advanced course in literature or language. Sometimes professional colleges offer special sections for their students in "engineering English" or "agricultural English." Usually the course extends through the freshman year, two semesters or three quarters, on the theory that it is a necessary preparation for any advanced work; but variations exist, such as making the course only two credits a term, extending into the second year or requiring one semester during the first year and the other during the third, to give the student some training in writing after experience in college has demonstrated the need for it and, incidentally, to exploit the relative frequency of student withdrawals during the first two years and ease problems of staffing the course.

Staffing the freshman course is a problem. Two groups, beginning instructors and graduate students teaching part time, carry most of the burden. Often neither is especially well prepared for the job. The instructors usually have had some experience as teaching assistants, but their study for the PhD is likely to have concentrated much more on literary history and criticism than on rhetoric and composition. The graduate students have the same sort of educational background, but less of it, and lack the experience. More and more, as enrollments increase, regular instructors are moving into courses in literature and graduate assistants are teaching freshman English. Sometimes the assistants are handed a syllabus, a class roll, and a set of desk copies and left to their devices. As their numbers increase, however, institutions have worked out programs for training them and supervising their work. Some departments conduct a regular seminar in the teaching of freshman English. Others hold weekly staff meetings and discuss approaches to the assignments for the week and work together on methods of grading and criticizing themes. Some departments have worked out apprenticeship systems, in which the assistant works with a veteran teacher to get experience. Class visits from senior staff members are used to try to regularize standards and to give beginning teachers advice.

The difficulty is not that most of all this is bad but that most of it is good. Almost every subject that serves as content in various freshman English courses is worthwhile. Students need to know about language, they can often profit from instruction in rhetoric, they should be comfortable in standard English, they need the humanizing influence of literature, they can learn from a study of logic or semantics. Teachers often have success teaching writing with material quite remote from English—social problems, student government, or vocational guidance. Most of the administrative variants of the course also have their justifications. The constant self-examination and the frequent despair characteristic of any gathering of teachers of freshman English result from frustrations of overabundance rather than poverty.

The conscientious teacher of freshman English frequently finds himself attempting so much that he can do nothing very thoroughly. Or he may indulge in a kind of unconscious hypocrisy, recognizing the impossibility of doing all that is expected and turning to whatever happens to interest him most, on the theory that it will help the student as much as anything else. Often it will. It should also be observed that these same pressures and reactions have influenced the English courses required of the student through high school, so that part of the problem of freshman English is the student's feeling that he is getting another quick review of the same series of topics he has been reviewing quickly for a number of years—without ever having stopped long enough to learn much about any of them.

Although popular faith in freshman English remains largely unshaken, the kinds of problems mentioned above have increasingly stimulated criticism from English teachers. The most drastic suggestion—and in some ways the most attractive one logically—is that the course be abolished, at least as a universal requirement.[2] The argument goes something like this. English departments have been given and have accepted responsibilities they cannot hope to fulfill and should not be asked to carry alone. The only realistic way to give those responsibilities to whoever should have them is to stop attempting the impossible. Responsibility for spelling and punctuation and elements of standard usage belongs to the elementary and high schools; it can be returned only if the colleges cease to assume it. Furthermore, writing cannot be taught in a vacuum; writing must be about something. If the special function of freshman English is to teach writing, this function can best be performed by various subject matter courses in the college, where subject matter is available and where assignments of writing can be realistic. Dropping freshman composition as a course would force all departments to share responsibility for students' use of the language.

The assumption behind his proposal is, of course, that there is no separate subject matter, no individual discipline, which justifies a college course in composition. Much recent discussion of freshman English has focused on attempts to discover whether there is such a discipline or what it is. "What Is English?" was the title of the opening address of the Conference on College Composition and Communication in 1962. In 1956 the Yearbook of the Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development had produced an answer: English is "what English teachers teach"—which is perhaps not so cynical as it sounds.

In spite, however, of the difficulties of deciding what English is, especially what freshman English is, it seems unlikely that the notion of doing away with the whole business will prevail. The need for improvement of the college student's use of English seems not to be disappearing, and groups other than English departments seem neither eager nor prepared to meet the need. Freshman English, of some sort, is likely to persist as the obvious way to try to make college students literate. Some of the less destructive sorts of self-criticism, then, and some of the current trends in the development of the course have more immediate interest.

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[2] Warner Rice, "A Proposal for the Abolition of Freshman English as It Is Now Commonly Taught, from the College Curriculum," *College English*, XXI (1960), 361–367.

Much of the criticism of the direction of the freshman course in recent years has come through the Conference on College Composition and Communication. Organized officially in 1949, under the sponsorship of the National Council of Teachers of English, the CCCC has held annual meetings since. It has steadily developed importance as a forum for new ideas about both the content and the administration of the course; its growing journal has gained influence. The CCCC has been especially influential in its hospitality to ideas developed in subject matter disciplines obviously related to the course but not readily accessible to freshman teachers—new ideas in linguistics or logic or semantics, for example. The CCCC has been concerned with such matters as adapting modern notions about language to freshman English, evaluating various administrative devices for meeting increasing enrollments, maintaining standards, promoting research in the teaching of English, improving the preparation of composition teachers, or improving textbooks. Most of the following, which seem to me the most important current trends in the development of the course, have been influenced strongly by the CCCC.

Possibly the most important development of the past twenty years—certainly the one which has attracted most public attention—is the English teacher's long-delayed recognition of facts about language which students of linguistics and philology have known for perhaps a century. On the one hand, teachers discovered that the prescriptive grammar in their textbooks, which they had been teaching without much confidence—or had been avoiding—had not described the English language very accurately when it was adopted from Latin grammar in the eighteenth century and had long ago been abandoned by students of language. On the other hand, they discovered that modern studies of language had developed new systems and new attitudes which promised some kind of revolution in the teaching of English.

The results of these discoveries have not been entirely salutary. Although they have been responsible for the beginnings of highly significant changes in the approaches of teachers and the content of textbooks and courses, they have also been responsible for a wide variety of confusions. On the one extreme, many teachers of English, as well as many other serious users of the language, approach panic in their fear that new grammar or new language study is dedicated to destroying the beauties of the English tongue. With an almost incredible propensity for misunderstanding, writers like Jacques Barzun or Wilson Follett rise in indignation against the new grammarians who seem unable to protect the language from the ravages of *It's me* or *Who were you talking to.* Such critics consistently miss the important distinction between what the linguist discovers as factual information about how language behaves or how usage changes and what the linguist as a user of the language adopts as his own dialect or condones in the writing of his students. They seem unable to distinguish descriptions of facts from judgments about behavior; the linguist who reports the fact that the verb *lie* is having a difficult time in colloquial American or that *good* is frequently an adverb in student speech is not thereby advocating that schools abandon the teaching of usage or that writers cease to strive for grace and precision. It is a remarkable testimony to the public interest in language that so many furious champions should have risen to defend language against those who are themselves most seriously interested in protecting it. Both the zeal and the absurdity of their position appear in their tendency to link the new grammar with communism or even progressive education.

On the other extreme are the friends of new linguistic knowledge who are better friends than interpreters. Whether or not linguistics is fomenting a revolution in the teaching of English, it is at least facing the dangers that attend revolutions, including the danger of a little learning. Linguistics has attracted among its disciples many who are moved more by faith than by reason, who look toward immediate constituents or transformations as miraculous formulas to solve all the problems of freshman English. Linguistics has suffered a good deal from its friends who know just enough about it to arm its critics.

Regardless of the extremes, however, the new interest in the study of language is changing freshman English. With increasing frequency, language study is appearing as subject matter in the course, emphases varying from the history of the English language to structural linguistics. Some composition texts are shifting from the traditional prescriptions to approaches based on grammatical facts. The most important change is a slow but persistent shift in the general attitude of teachers and directors of the course—toward efforts to show students how language works rather than to tell them what not to do, toward the teaching of grammar based on the grammar of English rather than Latin, focusing on word order and sentence patterns more than on drill in the classification of parts of speech or memorization of artificially contrived paradigms.

Less vigorous and less dramatic than the new enthusiasm for linguistics is a small but probably significant revival of interest in rhetoric. Stimulated partly, perhaps, by the logic of the challenge that freshman English has no subject matter to justify its existence, teachers have been asking themselves what they mean by the title that most commonly designates freshman English, "Composition and Rhetoric." Answers are not the same, but they tend to be serious. There is, for instance, a new interest in the possibilities of classical rhetoric, and teachers are looking with some respect not only at Aristotle but even at figures like Blair or Whately. More promising perhaps are attempts to revise or create a rhetoric compatible with modern linguistics. Both are efforts to replace the rather thin tradition that had developed by the end of the last century, with emphasis on distinguishing the forms of discourse, practicing some set—and not entirely realistic—devices for paragraph development, and going on record in favor of unity, coherence, and emphasis. The "new rhetoricians," who actually are not yet numerous or productive enough to attract this label, are likely to put more emphasis on rhetoric of the sentence—that is, for example, on distinguishing among various kinds of English sentence patterns and evaluating their relative effectiveness. They have also shown a good deal of interest in using rhetorical approaches to literary criticism. At the moment, textbooks, papers at professional meetings, and other evidence of this sort suggest with increasing vigor that something should be done to develop a new rhetoric; there is much to be done.

Some other important trends in freshman English grow less from developments in subject matter than from general changes in education and in society, such changes as increases in enrollment, shortages of instructors, the tightening of college entrance requirements, and improvements in high school English. In many ways recent reform movements, especially those financed by the government, have influenced the high school more than the college. Many high schools are making imaginative revisions of the curriculum and imposing higher standards, especially in connection with advanced placement and other devices for encouraging the good student. Some traditional freshman English courses obviously take the student from one of the better high schools a step backward. One important trend, resulting in part from new vigor in high school English, is the decreasing popularity of programs for the badly prepared student. The English O or English A remedial course, which was almost universal ten years ago, is being dropped by many institutions, sometimes retained as an extension course with a special fee but usually replaced only by higher entrance standards. Similarly writing clinics and laboratories for students needing special help are being abandoned. Even the various kinds of sophomore or junior proficiency examinations are being dropped in some of the more select schools.

As such courses lose popularity, provisions for superior students multiply. They include special honors courses and various systems which allow the good student to exempt all or part of the freshman course or substitute literature courses for it. Part of the same general pattern is a tendency to drop from freshman English the "review of fundamentals" which has often occupied much or even all of the first term of the course. As the review disappears, some institutions devote only a single semester to composition, sometimes reducing the freshman requirement but more often making the second semester an introduction to literature.

Another obvious reflection of general educational change is the trend toward experimentation with large classes, with television, with student readers, and other methods of meeting practical problems. Professor Kitzhaber summarizes:

> Today in colleges where there has been the greatest improvement in the caliber of entering freshmen, it appears that the remedial course is the first to go; then the regular freshman course is freed from the "review of fundamentals"; next the writing clinic is dropped; and in a few instances freshman composition itself has in effect disappeared, being replaced by a course in literature with a certain amount of required writing. It seems likely that this is the way most four-year institutions are now headed, and they will move in this direction just as fast as the caliber of their students will permit them.[3]

Although these trends exist, they have not yet appreciably altered the pattern of the composition course in the majority of schools, nor have they done much to alleviate the demand each year for hundreds of new teachers of freshmen. It is, then, especially important that new attitudes are influencing the preparation of college English teachers.[4] Traditionally, a requisite for a job as a teacher of freshman English is a PhD in English—which normally does very little directly to prepare an instructor for composition and rhetoric. It is not surprising that the beginning instructor commonly includes in his freshman teaching as much literature as he can slip by the syllabus; it is what he has been taught. Instead of knowledge that will help him with his classes, the new PhD has often inherited a general contempt for the course—an attitude that freshman English is a kind of purgatory to be endured in order to earn the right to a course in Henry James or Edmund Spenser. Fortunately some graduate schools have begun recently to modify their programs in order to arm students more adequately for the freshman courses they are likely to have to teach. Certain institutions have developed a PhD with a dissertation more closely related to teaching problems than to historical research. The Master of Arts degree in the teaching of

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[3] Kitzhaber, *op. cit.*, p. 94.

[4] See Warner G. Rice, "Teachers of College English: Preparation: Supply and Demand," *College English*, XXIII (March, 1962), 470–476.

English, sometimes worked out in cooperation with a college of education, is already widespread, differing from the conventional degree in education because it emphasizes mainly subject matter, but differing from the usual degree in English in its emphasis on teaching rather than research. The degree recognizes the demand for composition teachers in junior colleges and in many four-year institutions where the PhD requirement is being relaxed in deference to growing enrollment. Courses are being worked out to prepare instructors for specific jobs—as directors of freshman English, for instance. And most graduate programs are strengthening their offerings in linguistics and in rhetoric, subjects directly contributing to the teaching of freshman composition.

Practically, the most important trend of all may be the recently growing public agitation for better work in English, reflected in the establishment of Project English under the U.S. Office of Education and the possibility of further federal encouragement for the teaching of English, especially composition.[5] Project English is already financing a wide variety of projects, most of them in one way or another trying to do something about the fact that we know very little about how to teach people to speak and write their language. Although any experienced teacher is likely to have a great deal of knowledge about how he can be successful himself, nobody seems to have obviously defensible answers to such questions as what subject matter should be included in the composition course, does the study of grammar improve writing, is a daily theme better than a weekly theme or two or three themes a term, do small classes demonstrably do more than large ones, how valuable are regular individual conferences with students, what kinds of writing assignments work best for students, are individually taught classes more profitable than classes taught by television. Research in teaching composition, currently more vigorous than it has ever been, is attempting to provide scientifically valid answers to questions such as these. A committee of the NCTE on the state of knowledge about composition recently examined 485 studies on the teaching of composition; the committee's report indicates that most of the questions remain unanswered.[6]

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[5] See *Project English Newsletter*, U.S. Department of Health, Education, and Welfare, February, 1963; and "Project English," *College English*, XXIII (January, 1962), 313–315.

A major weakness of many research studies is their design. Most studies are statistical; groups are taught in different ways and results are tested. Conclusions are frequently unreliable because investigators have not followed standard research principles —have used inadequate or unrepresentative samples, have provided insufficient controls, or have manipulated statistics illogically. In an effort to remedy difficulties of this sort, Project English has sponsored a series of recent conferences in which professors of English, psychologists, and experts in testing, research design, and statistics have collaborated to outline needed research and also to suggest reliable procedures for conducting it.[7] These conferences have produced specific plans for different kinds of studies and have also stimulated interest in research in teaching.

The conferences and the sponsored projects are interesting and promising, but research in teaching methods may be in danger of overemphasis and in danger of seeming to promise more than it can fulfill. For example, there seems to be some tendency to meet the difficulties of establishing sound research designs by limiting investigation to problems which can readily be handled by statistical methods. Some projects seem to prove the self-evident or the trivial. And even after soundly worked out investigations of pertinent questions, doubts are likely to remain. What, for instance, are the goals of teaching we are trying to measure? By controlled periodic reading of a student's papers we can perhaps determine that his skill in writing themes has increased. Is this improvement an adequate index to the value of the course? Furthermore, the conclusions of research are often hard to interpret. Studies seem to show that students taught formal grammar do not improve in their writing any more than students who are not taught formal grammar. We cannot conclude that the teaching of formal grammar is a waste of time or even that it should not be included in the composition course. Some studies seem to indicate that students taught in large lecture sections improve in their writing about as rapidly as do students in small sections. We cannot conclude that large classes are as good as small ones. Information of this sort may be more reliable than the combination of instinct and tradition which often governs decisions about composition courses, but it may also be misleading.

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[6] Richard Braddock, Richard Lloyd-Jones, and Lowell Schoer, *Research in Written Composition* (Champaign, 1963).

[7] See Erwin R. Steinberg, *Needed Research in the Teaching of English* (Washington, 1963), and Louise M. Rosenblatt, *Research Development Seminar in the Teaching of English* (New York University, 1963, mimeographed report).

Probably of more immediate importance than research is the need for departments of English to take the course more seriously, to look more closely at the qualifications of its staff members for teaching composition, to give more attention to new knowledge about language and literature and methods of teaching them. Nearly a hundred chairmen of English departments meeting at the University of Illinois in December, 1962, passed resolutions urging more attention to the teaching of English, especially composition, more cooperation between secondary schools and colleges, and federal support for institutes and seminars to help college teachers "extend their knowledge of literature and language."[8]

I have emphasized the great diversity of the courses which fulfill the nearly universal catalogue requirement in American colleges for freshman English. I have emphasized also the extensive current criticism of the course and the variety in it, as well as indicating some of the directions in which the course seems to be going. And I have confessed considerable sympathy with many of the different courses, with many different sorts of criticisms, and perhaps with the diversity itself. It is therefore impossible for me to suggest that any one kind of course or any one kind of criticism is ideal or to advocate a single nationwide syllabus for freshman English. Differences in preparation of students and abilities of teachers make such uniformity undesirable even if it were possible. It is also impossible for me to pretend that any criticisms and suggestions I may make are entirely original, authoritative, or final. Nevertheless, I make some personal observations on the kinds of problems I have mentioned and some general suggestions for the course. I feel some obligation to make them, however tentatively, partly because so many existing courses reflect little of current criticisms or current trends. In spite of much discussion in periodicals like *College English* or *College Composition and Communication* and of strong talk in professional meetings, many courses continue as they have for many years, attempting more than they can hope to accomplish, repeating superficially much that the student has been scanning annually, unaware of any alleged revolutions in linguistics or any revivals of interest in rhetoric.

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[8] Robert W. Rogers, "Departmental Memo," *College English*, XXIV (March, 1963), 473-475.

One major distinction of the freshman English course is that it is normally required. Students frequently are not at their best in required courses. Those whose major interests are in money and banking or strength of materials are often hard to convince that they need to write in standard English or learn the form of the sonnet. And those who are interested in writing and in literature often find the requirement more confining than stimulating. As enrollments increase, difficulties increase. More and more untrained teachers meet classes; it becomes less significant that the good teacher can usually overcome the stupidity of a syllabus or the sterility of a textbook. Classes become larger; some rely on television; experiments test various devices for teaching more students with fewer teachers.

The fact that the course is required is important in another way. Its very existence depends at least partly on those who require it. It is a "service course," a standard part of every baccalaureate program, largely because administrators and faculty members believe that it offers something every graduate should have. These people who are responsible for making the course a requirement are generally fairly confident about what the course does—much more confident than those who teach it. William D. Templeman's survey of thirty-seven departmental opinions in one institution is probably typical; he summarizes:

> All departments assume that good writing can be taught, and they look to Freshman English to improve student writing. All indicate a general hope for student writing with clarity, unity, logicality, coherence, and

appropriate conventionality. Many express a specific hope for good spelling. Several departments hope specifically for good punctuation.[9]

Departments of English have a good deal of difficulty in deciding how literally they are to take the directive, usually implied if not stated, which establishes freshman English as a required course. Are they justified in teaching literature, especially if they decide that reading is likely to do more than anything else to improve writing? Can they make the course an introduction to structural linguistics or the history of the language, on the grounds that writing cannot be taught directly and that some knowledge about language is fundamental to a liberal education? The problem is intensified because of the still fairly widespread notion that almost anyone can teach English, since he can speak and write it. Luckily, perhaps, most faculty members do not know very much about what goes on in the freshman English classroom.

Nevertheless, freshman English has some rather special limitations almost by definition, because it is required for a specific purpose. I know of no way to make students give up their resentment toward a requirement, no formula for handling the confusions of increasing enrollments, no quick way to dispel the popular notion that an English teacher is essentially a comma bender. But I do have two suggestions, the first negative, the second positive.

I think that we cannot solve the basic problems of freshman English by administrative maneuvers or teaching machines. Experiments in class size, amount of writing required, uses of assistants, methods of testing and sectioning, and so on, are all useful and important, but there is danger that they may distract attention from what seems to me central—consideration of the subject matter of the course. A bad course can be as bad on television as in a classroom.

I think that we can remove some of the handicaps that result from a service concept of the course and at the same time approach honestly the purposes for which the course is required by

[9] "Thirty-seven Departments on Freshman English," *College Composition and Communication*, XIII (May, 1962), 35–40. See also Joseph Mersand, *Attitudes Toward English Teaching* (Philadelphia, 1961).

concentrating on the content of the course. We need to think more about what the subject matter of the course should be, and we need to learn more about this subject matter. But this leads to further discussion and more suggestions.

As I have already indicated, I think that freshman English—like most courses in secondary school English—suffers from an abundance of content, from attempting too much. The conscientious teacher feels with justification that no student should graduate without some exposure to the subjects he believes in—usually in literature but sometimes in semantics or logic or something else. And the administration is happy to rely on the freshman course—which conveniently catches all students—to satisfy demands that some work in the humanities be part of a liberal education. As a result, the course tends to absolve some programs from the responsibility of requiring other English—a course in literature, say. At the same time, the course often lacks focus; the pattern of literature Monday, grammar drill Wednesday, and a theme Friday is fairly common, often with little connection established between the varied activities. The student senses no plan, feels no progression.

Questions of content, in other words, seem to me behind most of the difficulties of freshman English. I know of no solutions, but I make some suggestions—personal and tentative:

1. Freshman English, by varying its content and raising its standards, should become more than a repetition of high school English. Increasingly students who complain about freshman English object not to its difficulty but to its simplicity; they find it more elementary than their senior high school course. They are often right, more often as high school honors and advanced placement courses multiply and as high school teaching standards improve. Freshman English should be a college level course, presenting subject matter more difficult than that of the high school course and requiring better work.

2. The course should focus on some organized subject matter. It should not attempt to review all the student has presumably learned in high school and also attempt to introduce the student to all important aspects of English. I am aware of the

pedagogical logic on the side of combining approaches to communication—reading, writing, listening, speaking—and of relating these to various problems of the students' environment. But I think that practically this approach spreads everything too thin. I suggest that the course should attempt less but do it more thoroughly.

3. The course should be organized to give the student some sense of accomplishment, of progression. Too often the course is mainly a series of writing assignments, differing little in the kind of task they impose or in difficulty, with readings and discussion of usage scattered among them. Learning composition, of course, does not have any obvious natural order. It may begin with a study of diction and go on toward a study of organization of large units of composition, or it may work in the reverse direction with equal logic. Since the student is writing as he learns, he actually is studying all topics at once. But a kind of order can be imposed, even though it may be mainly arbitrary, as a pedagogical device, a way of helping students to see some sense in what they are doing.

4. If the course is to include mainly literature, it should be an introduction to literature, offering literature for its own value, on the assumption that this is the most important part of English to require of all students. Furthermore, the administrative groups which require the course should be aware of what is happening, so that the instructor is not restrained by any obligation to teach a poem primarily as an illustration of principles of punctuation. Although a course teaching literature for its own sake may do more than anything else to improve writing, a course teaching literature primarily for the purpose of improving writing is likely to teach neither literature nor writing. The study of literature is too important to be maintained in the curriculum by a subterfuge. Many teachers believe, especially as high school standards continue to improve, that freshman literature should replace the composition and rhetoric course as the English requirement for the first year of college.

5. I think, however, that there is more than enough subject matter on the art of writing to justify a separate course, a course that can be made interesting and challenging enough for college

students and one that works directly toward the purposes for which freshman English is usually required. This subject matter is difficult and not readily defined, and about many parts of it we know much less than we should. There is, for example, no new rhetoric to parallel the new criticism and the new grammar. It seems to me that a major need of English departments is more study of the art of composition; investigation of rhetorical problems seems to me of more real importance than many of the research projects in methods of teaching English. We still need to know much more about what we teach.

Defining, organizing, and studying the art of composition is difficult for a variety of reasons, but especially because it is a combination of several conventional disciplines. The diffuseness of content which I have been deprecating is in part justified; what is needed is selection and focus. The subjects to be selected as especially pertinent for a course in composition seem to me to be the ancient trivium—rhetoric, grammar, and logic. And the focus for them seems to me to be rhetoric, developed in the light of new knowledge in semantics, psychology, linguistics.

In other words, what is needed to define a subject matter for the course is a synthesis of relevant parts of a number of bodies of knowledge, and the difference from present practices is largely one of attitude. For example, what we refer to grammatically as subordination seems to me a topic of considerable importance to any study of composition. The concept is involved in grammar, logic, and rhetoric. It is likely to get into the freshman course in a variety of ways but less significantly than it should, largely because we do not know much about it in some ways. The modern grammarian can describe accurately and consistently phenomena in the English language which are variations on the concept of subordination. The logician uses the concept in describing relationships between ideas or in classifying propositions. But for rhetorical purposes, when we consider subordination as a device of writing, our understanding of the concept is quite inadequate. We find the handbooks conventionally saying something like "subordinate material of lesser importance." The advice is not only too limited, it is wrong; that is, it is not consistent with what we do in language, as the grammarian can readily show.[10] Subordination is not based on "importance." I am not sure what it is based on, although I suspect that it is related to levels of specification. We need to find out.

For purposes of teaching composition, we need more than a grammatical description of patterns of subordination; we need to know the effects of the patterns, the relationships the device reveals, the purposes for which the device can be used by the writer. Or, as another illustration, we might consider the basic predication patterns of the sentence. The new grammars, particularly generative grammar, have shown us a good deal about how sentence patterns work. We need, however, to know more from a rhetorical point of view, about the effects of different patterns, about the advantages of one over another in different contexts. We need also to relate our grammatical knowledge of the sentence with semantics, to consider which expressions are appropriate semantically as well as grammatically in various slots in the sentence pattern.

In dozens of other ways, grammar, logic, semantics, rhetoric all contribute to what seems to me the obvious content for freshman English, if it is to be a distinct course, separate from introductory courses in literature or language. Such content, materials pertinent to techniques of writing, drawn mainly from linguistics, logic, rhetoric, and semantics, along with regular writing practice, seems to me more than enough to occupy a year-long course of college difficulty.

6. One further suggestion is obvious. If composition is to be the subject matter of freshman English, some changes are needed in the graduate study preparing teachers of the course. A survey of the supply of English teachers in 1959–1960 reported:

> If there is a grave lack, however, it is in the production of teachers of freshman composition who are specifically trained and psychologically conditioned to perform with enthusiasm and real distinction.[11]

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[10] See James Sledd, "Co-ordination (Faulty) and Subordination (Upside-Down)," *College Composition and Communication*, VII (December, 1956), 181–187.

[11] Rice, *op. cit.*, p. 475.

Prospective college teachers will need more work in language, more in rhetoric, more that will prepare scholars for needed research in the disciplines contributing to composition.

From several points of view, freshman English is the most important work of the English department. It affects more students and occupies more teachers than any other. For many students it is the only college level experience with language or literature. It is, by reputation at least, basic to success in other disciplines. If it is to survive, it must extend, not merely summarize, high school work, and it must focus on content significant enough to warrant its continued existence. Finally, it must be staffed by dedicated and dynamic teachers, for in no other course is the personality of the teacher so crucial.

6

RICHARD LLOYD-JONES

Advanced Composition

To write perfectly is a goal quite beyond human achievement. We would have to possess a flawless knowledge of our own language and that of our reader, our own nature and his, the objective world and the possible subjective reactions to it. Because we cannot expect so much of mortal student, we must decide how much we can try to teach, how much time will allow, and how much our teaching ability can afford.

Some, of course, would not even try—or at least not very hard. They look at the problem and are thwarted by the difficulty of achievement. "You can't teach writing anyway," they say. Practical administrators complain that writing is expensive to teach; we ought to teach no more than the bare minimum. Still others say that after the minimum skills are mastered, the teaching of writing should be turned over to subject matter specialists. Writing is a byproduct of having something to say. And some few argue that no student who comes to college should need instruction in writing, even at the freshman level.

But before we accept such excuses, we should ask where the talented student can better spend his time than in a class studying the most difficult problems of human communication. Even if he does not solve all the problems, his awareness of what problems need solving may be the most important part of his humane or professional life. The close study of the process of articulating ideas may be the best prescription for one who would develop a free, reasoning mind capable of understanding his culture and living compassionately with his fellow men.

Unfortunately, not every student will profit greatly from additional work in writing. Some will not care enough: an indifferent student may be forced to learn the mechanical matters of form and the gross rules of composition, but the subtle devices of advanced rhetoric are available only to the student who cares. And, in matters of writing, some students seem to be sows' ears; there is little use in trying to make silk purses out of them. Yet, bright people of all kinds thrive only to the degree that they master language. The man of fact (a scientist or engineer or literary scholar, perhaps) must express his insights or they serve no one. The man of affairs can lead his fellow men only if he is a master of communication. One might almost assert that the English major, whose aptitudes and whose close study of the best writing offer continual opportunities for self-improvement, least needs the advanced writing course. The mastery of expression is perhaps the truest mark of humanity, so those who have the greatest capacity, whatever their major interests, should be given the greatest opportunity to study writing.

Remedial work for upperclassmen is another question. If the previously unmotivated student has seen the light, he should be saved, perhaps at extra cost to himself and with no college credit for reward. Certainly the upperclass student needing remedial work should not be tossed into an advanced course just because he has made it to the junior year. His presence confuses the purpose of the instruction. So long as the English department insists upon clear separation of remedial and advanced students, the instruction for both will improve and will gain greater respect from other departments.

The problem of keeping the remedial student out of the advanced course, however, is by no means the only practical issue in teaching advanced composition. Who is to teach? How is the course to be organized? What is the cost?

Finding teachers is the hardest part. The reader must be especially sensitive to language, for the students are themselves especially good. They try exotic tricks, so the separate papers must be read slowly by a person of wide experience and taste; the rule book often goes out the window. If the course is technical or business writing, the teacher ought to know something of science or business so that he can reach his own audience and judge their efforts in reaching audiences. In short, some sort of double competence is needed; the castoffs and leftovers of the department must not be assigned this highly specialized task.

To keep the task within bounds, various forms of class organization are possible, but all are expensive. Because the problems are often unusual and the students require individual studio training, small discussion classes are probably best. The more the course is advanced, the more the workshop approach is useful. At intermediate levels it is possible to have an especially competent teacher lecture to classes and to use readers for marking the large number of papers. The lecturer, however, must have time to check his readers closely. If the budget makers do not try to skimp on the supervisory time, this may be a good method of training new teachers and extending the power of the exceptional teacher; however, even with readers, fewer students can be accommodated in a lecture-discussion course in composition than in a lecture-discussion course in literature. Whatever is done, the cost for each hour of instruction will be high—comparable to the cost of studio courses in art or music. Deans simply must be persuaded that the value of the work in the total educational program justifies the cost; the truly expensive courses are those with low educational value.

The ultimate problem in teaching advanced composition is in having people see what it is. If it is "writing skills," then it is a social tool that is subject to analysis and reproduction, teachable at almost any level of refinement. So identified, it seems trivial, vocational, a mere menial in the house of intellect. Yet, linguistic and rhetorical analysis, psychoanalysis and social surveying, deduction and induction can be brought to bear on almost any communication problem at almost any level of sophistication the student can manage. But the possibility of study at a complicated level is only one justification of an advanced course. Many trivial subjects are complicated. The real test is whether the study is worth the effort.

For some people the economic and vocational value may be enough justification, but the important value is human, not economic. Almost every book on style repeats Buffon's "Style is the man." The point of Herbert Read's *English Prose Style* is a demonstration of the proposition. Read sees style as determined by the psychological type and the mode of perception. One does not have to be a Whorf or a Wittgenstein to believe that the objective world is ordered by the forms of language and discourse as they are modified by the unique perception. One does not have to study general semantics to know that a writer's ethical relationship with his reader is implied by the variation of expression designed to reach what one man conceives another man to be. Man as an individual and as a social creature is implied in the ability to write. What is more worthy of advanced study? And how is the study carried on to realize the value?

Courses in nonfictional prose for upperclass students are normally of three kinds: expository writing, business writing, and technical writing. To be sure, many courses show characteristics of all three, but the classification is still meaningful.

Although some courses with these titles are taught for freshmen, characteristically the student must have completed his freshman work and generally must have indicated some sort of vocational choice before he is eligible for the advanced course. Indeed, sometimes the course is not even taught in the English department. Instead, departments of business or science or engineering conduct and staff the course in their area. Just as when literature is included in the conventional freshman course, there is a danger that English professors will teach literature rather than writing, so also there is a danger that professors of business or science will teach business or science instead of writing.

ADVANCED EXPOSITORY WRITING

Materials which describe current practices in teaching expository writing are not as readily available as those in other writing courses. The instructor of advanced expository writing has a small course, usually not required, and exercises the prerogatives of Cabots and Lowells and fiefholders of graduate courses in literature. He reports only to himself or God. Apparently the teacher of style is so overwhelmed by the art he teaches that he cannot bear to commit himself to the paper. Yet this shy beast leaves his traces. The courses are listed in catalogues; people at professional meetings will admit having taught them (note the past tense); autobiographers shed tears of reminiscent joy over the teachers of their youth; and there are hints from bookmen or those who planned the composition course for the College Entrance Examination Board's summer institutes. In the main, inference must fill in where systematic surveys have not been made, and the first and great inference is that there are two basic approaches. One approach begins with man as a rational creature; the other takes man as a rationalizing animal.

The rational approach could be as severe as any course in technical writing or mathematics; the forms of truth in the objective world must be recorded in the symbols of language. The purist's precision and fixed forms of logic would be the guides of instruction. Yet, in fact, I know of no one who pursues such a logical extreme. Time, place, and audience alter the requirements of logic. Narration, description, definition, classification, analysis, exposition, and even argumentation are merely topic headings around which discussions and assignments are grouped. The skeleton of a narration may be a time sequence, but the purpose may be to explain general procedures, to give specific directions, to record a single past event, to predict a future one, to persuade, or to do almost anything a man can do with words. The convenient divisions are shown merely to be conveniences, and the instructor of the logical course quietly admits the value of the hunch.

The rational approach is valuable, however, especially in departments which offer but one advanced course. In the first place it serves the practical needs of most people; students from all departments who want to go beyond the freshman course should be able to find another that is useful. Even the English major ought to know how the world expresses its daily business; the English major may teach others how to write and should know what they need to know. Furthermore, the enthusiasm of some students of literature for expressive language contributes more than its share of nonsense to public print. After all, simple intelligibility is a primary virtue, and clarity is not easy to create. Whatever the limits of language may be, we direct our lives on the theory that we can make verbal sense; so we ought to study straightforward statement first.

All of the variations common to the freshman course are apparent in these orderly advanced courses. The advanced course, however, probably betrays a stronger literary bias because it is presumed that the students are truly interested in language and literature. Sentence and paragraph structure can be demonstrated in works of literary excellence as well as in articles designed to acclimate the freshman to college life, and the expository monuments of a noble past may contribute more to liberal education than well-written materials of current practical interest. Yet, at any level the forms of discourse are convenient units for organizing a course. Workshop examinations of assigned papers and individual conferences are methods for all teachers of composition even though the comments may be different, for mere correctness of sentence structure and usage is assumed and emphasis and implication are more usual difficulties.

The further the course moves toward accommodating nonrational material, the more it advances beyond practical need. The justification of such courses is similar to that given for courses in writing poetry or fiction. The close examination of subtle technique may speed up the development of exceptional writers and surely sharpens the critical awareness of all who want to write well. Conceivably the most delicate discriminations can be recognized by only a few students and created by still fewer, so the course can find sufficient enrollment only in large schools or in those catering to the elite. Just as some students are verbally so inept or inhibited that they never will manage more than brute organization, so some will only come close to understanding style. Doubtless many of those who profess great interest in literature are attracted by the ideas and the grosser forms of literary organization and remain relatively insensitive to diction. Yet, to the good students, the unanswerable questions are best.

To ask the hard question, however, is difficult. Should one teach the history of English prose style? The current rash of books of essays selected from Caxton to Kennedy suggests that the approach is once again popular after some years of prescribing only twentieth century prose. The historical survey offers a full demonstration of voices and devices (the twentieth century's enthusiasm for conversational prose has limited the writing voice as much as it has extended it). By parody, burlesque, or imitation, a student can experiment with devices he cannot name and would not ordinarily use. He can better parody or burlesque what he can dramatize as different from himself; he overcomes his self-consciousness and plays with words. No student is likely to become a new Lyly or Addison, but a moment of pretending enlarges his own views of the language. The older writers are obviously different, so the inexperienced reader is able to see variations in style—an issue both in analysis and imitation.

Or should one be philosophical? Plato, Aristotle, Cicero, and Quintilian; Wilson, Puttenham, Saintsbury, and Read all have points to make. For example, if we study technique, we can examine all of the flowers of ancient rhetoric. The terms are deadly, yet if a student finds recent examples of each listed device, he may come to know a lot about writing. Or if we believe that style is the man, we can take Read's classification by the psychological type and the mode of perceiving as a way to describe the man. He gives many examples, and the teacher can offer more. Perhaps with Walker Gibson we pursue the limits of language and find that style is a debt that language owes to the unknowable. The student will return with some admiration for Ruskin's view of the necessary imperfection of great art; he may even be encouraged to follow the gleam of continual revision.

Should one organize a course by voice alone? All communication is to some extent dramatic: What is the situation? Who are the principals? How is their attention engaged? For the business writer the question is translated into a statistical market analysis of the audience, but for the stylist the stance of the writer is the puzzle. Each sample of writing becomes a specimen for revealing a person in a social context. How do you know Shakespeare from his plays? How do you know Red Smith from his sports column? Once such questions are answered, one's own collection of masks can be examined. But even more, the course outline can allow room for analysis of particular questions of voice, such as, what is the effect of irony? What is the difference between irony which clearly suggests that the stated point is not to be believed and irony which suggests an ambivalence—both sides of the irony are true and false, a paradox? And how do these differ from other comparative figures—metaphor, simile, analogy, metonomy, synecdoche, parable, fable, allegory, and symbol? If voice is oral (and good writing is oral), then what are the devices of sound which create a voice? Periodic, balanced, and loose sentences, antithesis and series, the Asian and the Attic, the Ciceronean and the low styles are all signs which can direct the discussions of voice. The study of voice, however, is aimed at revealing what is unique in man, or at least in examining his Pirandellan mask, and in inferring from a study of rhetorical forms how one identifies his own voice. The advanced course, then, may be the most unabashedly humane course offered in any curriculum.

BUSINESS WRITING

The business writing courses are perhaps the farthest removed from the traditional English department and are most often attacked as trivial or irrelevant. Several prominent studies of business school curricula have suggested elimination or drastic remodeling of business writing courses.[1] Some of the objections are founded upon misconceptions of what the course is supposed to do—undoubtedly misunderstandings based upon the example of courses which are badly managed.

Some business writing courses are really subcollegiate programs for secretaries. Their emphasis is on material which should have been learned in the eighth grade. The basic point of the course is mechanical correctness of minutiae of form.

More common is the business writing course which is primarily an examination of formulas for writing various letters or reports. Although the texts usually contain an attack on the model letter books of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, the spirit is pretty much the same as that exhibited in the books of models. That is, if the student learns a "correct" model, he has learned everything he needs to know. In these courses an inordinate amount of time is spent on the mechanics of letter form, of classification of letter types, and on the routine preparation of letters.

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[1] Robert Aaron Gordon and James Edwin Howell, *Higher Education for Business* (New York, 1959); Frank Cook Pierson *et al.*, *The Education of American Businessmen* (New York, 1959).

The best courses are generally presented by members of the American Business Writing Association. Maintained for years by C. A. Anderson and now sustained by secretary Francis W. Weeks of the University of Illinois, the ABWA has consistently supported practices which emphasize some clearly defined purpose of communication in relation to the audience. Good writing in business is judged by the reaction of the audience, so good business writing courses are oriented toward an audience.[2]

One may take issue with specific positions expressed by the ABWA, yet one cannot help respecting various studies on current practice undertaken by members of the organization, their recommendations for future activities and their reaction to attacks from outsiders.[3] Probably a very large proportion of those teachers who seriously want to teach students how to write in business belong to the organization. From ABWA studies we know that most business writing courses are taught outside of departments of English, and that those taught by English professors are taught by men who have very little formal training in what goes on in business. There are few indeed who have been specifically trained in problems of business communication. Perhaps that is why at least some members of ABWA advocate graduate programs in business communication.

Usually, a two- or three-semester-hour writing course is required of business majors. The largest block of time is given to

[2] Frank Ryerson, "Emerging Principles of Learning in Collegiate Courses in Business Writing," *The ABWA Bulletin*, XXVII (February, 1963), 4–13, offers a sensible justification of business writing courses.

[3] William J. Lord, Jr., "Business Writing in U. S. Colleges and Universities," *The ABWA Bulletin*, XXVI (April, 1962), 17–21; Herta A. Murphy and Charles E. Peck, "Content and Trends of Basic College Business Writing Courses That Include Business Letter Writing," *The ABWA Bulletin*, XXVII (October, 1962), 11–33.

writing letters. In worst form such a course is simply thirty-two sessions of patter to accompany a series of conventional letters—inquiries, complaints, adjustments, collections. There are workbooks providing problems which must be solved. There are case studies in which a series of letters of various kinds is written in response to a developing situation; there are books of bad letters to be rewritten. In its best form, the course requires regular writing in varying situations. The content changes, and the audience changes. Because there is a strong emphasis on having the writing accomplish some purpose for a clearly identified audience and because that purpose is usually quite specifically defined, the student gains some basic understanding of what writing is for. Because the letter is usually short, there is time for close revision. Because it is easily demonstrated that a single word, ill chosen, may make a good letter into a bad letter, there is an unusual opportunity for the discussion of the emotional effects of choice of diction. Because a letter may serve as a contract in which a simple error may have very serious consequences, there is ample opportunity for discussing exactness in writing. In short, there is no particular reason why a letter writing course cannot provide an admirable basis for discussing composition in general. As long as schools of business want the course taught anyway, we have a chance to preach the gospel of good prose in their own pulpits, but we must follow one of our own dicta—we must learn the language and the preconceptions of our audience.

Beyond the course focused on letter writing (or combined with it), there may be the report writing course. Because a report is organized rationally, an instructor can discuss all of the methods of arriving at judgments. He can show how fact is related to generalization in a way that few freshman instructors can demonstrate, for it is obvious even to the dullest students that sound business decisions require facts. Likewise, because the student happily envisions a boss as a rational man, he learns to tame the emotional but fuzzy talk he associates with salesmanship. Unfortunately such report writing courses are not common.

Because business writing courses place so much emphasis upon audience, there is little discussion of "correct English." The textbooks may have long lists of proscribed phrases, but the criteria for disapproval are unnaturalness, pomposity, redundance, and negative tone. The businessman may defend the doctrine of correctness in theory, but in practice he uses what works, what is certified by common usage. This may be deplorable; still, the better business courses which decline to discuss the subject at all or take a very liberal attitude toward usage at least avoid the harm done by courses which stress negative correctness at the expense of positive content. Even readability formulas and half-truths about poor usage provide for timid writers an objective measure that breeds confidence which in turn breeds clearer writing. The highly verbal English professor can easily underestimate the stifling fear that silences or muddles much of the population.

In business writing courses several special efforts at motivation are possible. For example, at least one program calls for exercises in dictation by students of writing to secretarial students. The writing student gets practice in dictating and delivers more work than he can if he does his own typing; the secretarial student gets real practice in taking dictation. Both learn the problems of dealing with other ordinary people. Students may be assigned all sorts of practical problems in reporting for their part-time jobs. They may be asked to gain material about the field in which they seek employment. Application letters ordinarily appeal directly to students' needs and challenge them with a difficult problem of self-consciousness. On occasion, joint assignments may be worked out with instructors of the business courses, so that content may be provided in a regular business course, and particular instructions on the expression of content may come from the business writing course. Senior essays under such joint sponsorship can be useful, and the writing instructor will have built-in advantages in motivation if he cares to use them.

Perhaps because the structure of modern business depends upon effective marketing, the most pervasive feature of the business writing course is the emphasis upon persuasion. "Every letter is a sales letter." "Your report is your only way to sell yourself to the boss." "Your idea is no good if you can't sell it." Such statements may sound distressingly like Willie Loman's "They like me." But more accurately, they show a desire not merely "to be liked" but also to understand the motive of the audience. This is not writing sent out to be beautiful or Platonically true; it is sent out to be useful. Nor need it be immoral. When the business writer celebrates the "you attitude," he may be talking about manipulating an audience, but he also is implying that any writer or any person should concern himself with the needs of others. The report may be persuasively stated and seductively presented, but the instructor is still obligated to demand sound, well-organized content.

TECHNICAL WRITING

The technical writing courses stress organization of content, sometimes even at the expense of audience. Recently the courses have been serving two masters. The earliest programs, especially as emphasized by the American Society for Engineering Education and more recently by the Institute of Radio Engineers, were designed to teach the engineer and the science student how to write acceptably in their professional activities. Writing was regarded as a supplementary skill through which the scientist or technician could record knowledge, and emphasis fell more on precision of recording than on communication.

Recently a second pattern has developed. Since World War II, the demand for technical writers has grown rapidly. The Society of Technical Writers and Publishers (STWP), a byproduct of that demand, has appeared and concerns itself with the status of such writers and the procedures for training them. The present writers are displaced scientists or engineers, or graduates of schools of journalism, high school teachers, and ex-English professors. To replace them, at least some employers have called for men especially trained for industrial technical writing. In this, there is increasingly a danger that those interested in professional technical writing or in specific industrial procedures will shift emphasis from the liberal value of good writing about technical subjects to preparation in the current customs of industrial publishing.

The pattern which most conventionally has interested departments of English has been that of teaching engineering and science students to write better than freshmen do. Probably courses in technical writing for engineering students have concentrated unduly on remedial work. Some students, as early as they can, concentrate on science and engineering at the expense of the humanities and the social sciences. In high school they take only what English they must. Only as upperclassmen at college do they learn that they must write well. The inevitable consequence is pressure to make technical writing into remedial work. This pressure should be resisted. To bind handbooks of usage of "grammar" sections into technical writing books is to take attention away from the special value of a course that teaches rational thought and clear exposition. If remedial work is needed, send the students to a remedial course; if review is needed, let the students seek out freshman handbooks. When the technical writing book is enlarged by large chunks of subfreshman material, the instructor is tempted into triviality, and the student is led to believe that he is taking another course in avoiding egregious mechanical errors.[4]

Earlier textbooks, some of which were prepared for use in special sections of the freshman course, look like freshman textbooks with some of the examples and some of the jargon changed. Even now, some of the best current texts still reflect their origin in the English department, although there is an obvious effort in them to explain the material in terms of industrial customs. In general, the "grammar" sections of these texts have been reduced. While the bitter fact of student incompetence tends to keep both textbook and class instruction at a level of remedial work, most new texts do try to teach rhetoric. Courses based on them may trifle with dullness and pedantry, but they are likely to be intellectually sound.

The engineering report writing course, which often showed undue emphasis on the mechanics of form, emphasizes the design of a report. That is, the student is not asked to learn the niceties of an all-purpose form, but he is asked to understand the basic intellectual pattern with which he is working. Because the justification of the report is the accurate expression of content, there is far more emphasis on the structure of an idea than there is in the ordinary freshman course. Indeed, the design of the report may well be a course in practical cogitation and rational method.

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[4] Israel Light, "What's in Books on Technical Writing—A Content Analysis," *STWP Review*, X (January, 1963), 4-6.

In a modern report, material is arranged on the page so that it may immediately be understood. Time is money in the report reader's world. The use of tables, boxes, subheadings, and color comes under the purview of the writer of technical reports, although such subjects are rarely mentioned in a freshman course. Speed of communication is more important than overt persuasion.

The casebook approach for teaching engineering is occasionally adapted for the teaching of writing. Extended models are studied in detail. The student is given a created situation and is asked to solve it, presenting the solution in reports or letters. Usually the basic information is provided by the instructor, although on occasion the student is asked to get the information either from other technical courses or from his experience in the practical world. In some schools the student may be required to prepare a fairly comprehensive paper which is jointly supervised by an engineering instructor and an English instructor.

A perhaps unfortunate development is extreme specialization. If one can make a special course for science or engineering students, one can make others for chemists and civil engineers. Somewhere the reduction of the student audience becomes absurd. Factual writing is similar for most specialties, and special courses in forms may obscure the study of problems in communication. A report course can be and is made into a course in proposal writing. Yet, are proposals really different enough or strange enough to require special treatment? Or is it a fad based on current industrial lamentations?

The aims of the Society of Technical Writers and Publishers are much more verbal than those of the engineers. Because these members of STWP desire mostly to be professional writers about scientific subjects, they wish a greater knowledge of the processes of communication. However, there is considerable confusion because the definition of technical writer is broad.

At one extreme is the writer of manuals and handbooks. What is wanted in such manuals can be described in detail, and the writer is merely obliged to substitute information in what amount to blanks; in short, he needs no real education at all to do his job. In contrast, the professional report writer usually works in conjunction with scientists or engineers who gather information. The writer is the editor of the report and often has substantial technical background. As an editor, he needs all sorts of information about the arrangement and verbal formulation of ideas, and he must translate technical jargon into general English. The more he knows about the mechanics of publishing the better, for he must choose appropriate reproduction methods and provide illustrations.

Still, these writers, whether they are junior administrators or professional science writers belonging to the Council for the Advancement of Science Writing, are engaged in some of the most difficult communication problems. They are responsible for translating scientific information for people who are not well trained in the sciences or for translating information from one scientific field to another. Although this particular job is an extremely difficult one in communication, few schools have done much work on it. The National Science Foundation has financed seminars to discuss it. The graduate program at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute and some programs of technical journalism touch on it. Courses on the philosophy of language or communication and in psychology, sociology, and anthropology dwell on related aspects. The English department contributes work in linguistics and modern rhetoric. But even the most publicized attempts to synthesize a new study seem to be preliminary, and the English department's specialist in communication is still the best utility infielder.

The basic bias of almost all programs in technical writing is toward the subject. The problem of the instructor, therefore, is to use this bias to make the science student more fluent and more aware of the reader. Frequent writing in small doses often relieves intellectual blockage; one establishes regular habits. Although the awareness of rhetorical patterns as such may inhibit a fluent English major who likes to improvise, it may release the ideas of an engineer who likes maps and blueprints. Quite possibly the problems of the science student also require more coordinated work on speech, not for its own sake especially, but as a way of promoting clarity. He will learn more willingly if he finds that his fellow students are baffled by what he says than he will if an English instructor indicates a lack of understanding. After all, to a science student the English instructor is a foreigner who does not have the language to understand science. Also the student who cannot write clearly can often be quizzed until he reveals what is on his mind; then the step to "Why-didn't-you-write-it-that-way?" is a short one.

To prescribe one right way to teach writing is foolish, especially at advanced levels. Yet, technical writing courses are rational and the subject itself is emphasized. The business writing courses are focused on the audience. In expository writing courses, language or perhaps the writer himself is more likely to be stressed. These distinctions reflect the difference in characteristic purpose of the students, not an elaborate theory of teaching. Sometimes the student's purpose is narrowly vocational; sometimes it is humane. The teacher's purpose ought never be narrow.

Indeed, all of the advanced courses in composition, even technical and business writing, ought to be basically humane and social. The value of good writing in a vocation may persuade some faculties to require them, some students to take them, and some executives to campaign for them, but any teacher who restricts himself to narrowly vocational materials teaches a trivial course—and one of questionable vocational value. The forms of reports and the fashions of punctuation change fairly rapidly, and any student who is permitted to think that in memorizing forms he has learned to write is encouraged in the most horrifying nonsense. Yet, the student's own commitment to some form of professional knowledge is just what gives force and substance to the advanced composition course. When the student is committed to knowing, then he can be bound to language; when the student desires to place his knowledge before the world, he will listen to the English teacher. The English teacher can afford to take a lectern of the student's choice.

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RICHARD SCOWCROFT

Courses in Creative Writing

IF THE PHRASE "creative writing course" provokes suspicion, demands qualification and even, perhaps, justification, the courses themselves are as common in the English department curriculum as Shakespeare, Chaucer, and Milton. Not only do the courses abound but specializations in writing are permitted in a wide choice of departments. Undergraduate majors or minors in writing can be pursued at the Universities of Washington, Oregon, Utah, Iowa, Missouri, Ohio, Indiana, North Carolina, Alabama; at Stanford, San Francisco State, Barnard, Beloit, Cornell, Brown, Antioch, and on and on. Many of the same universities allow a play, a collection of poems or stories, or a novel to serve as a master's thesis; at Iowa, a work of imaginative writing may serve as a doctoral dissertation. Some universities which do not permit a specialization in writing offer as full a selection of courses as those that do. Harvard, for example, has not only many writing courses but also an endowed chair, the last three holders of which have been poets teaching creative writing.

The fact that nearly all colleges offer creative writing courses does not mean that all people with opinions approve. Questioning or downright condemnation comes both from writers, who insist that writing cannot be taught, and from scholars, who consider writing a trade school discipline, as unfitting a college curriculum as auto mechanics. Perhaps suspicion came with the influx of novelists and poets into the academic world; the English department with a man placing his verse in *The New Yorker* or

Poetry, his stories or articles in *The Hudson Review,* is no longer uncommon. Whatever his own concept of his teaching role, his very presence may suggest that he has a secret to impart which will see his students through the magic doors of publication. Writers' conferences spawning across the country may also encourage false hope and suspicion. Certainly no one criticized those kindly ladies who, with examples from Bacon, Hazlitt, and Holmes, used to instruct us in the proper making of an essay; nor was it considered fraudulent that an aged gentleman for whom the modern short story meant Wilbur Daniel Steele should set a class to building stories according to the blueprint of Clayton Hamilton. Nothing professional could come of *that,* and where was the harm as long as the man's heart belonged to Robert Browning?

The goals and hopes of the writing teacher, as well as his special problems, are largely unknown to anyone but himself. He has not, like the scholars, exposed himself at meetings of the Modern Language Association; when he speaks before the College English Association, he is very apt to be defending his role rather than explaining it. The result is that even the friendly administrators who pat him on the back are unsure exactly what he does or what he means to do. And unfortunately, he himself is not always much help in defining his role. The teacher of Romantic poets might quite adequately and concisely state that he would wish his students to have read, understood, and formed critical judgments on the Romantic poets. The teacher of writing, though he would like to be adequate and concise, is apt to flounder and finally come up with, "I should have to write a five-thousand-word essay on the subject," or "It can't be explained."

His pretensions are, in truth, at once more modest and more ambitious than the phrase "teacher of writing" suggests. No one in any college, I am certain, believes that writing can be taught. Not all consider the potential "writer" the chief target of instruction. To the one man who would state that if the student "has the talent and the ability to apply himself, he can become a professional fiction writer," there would be twenty to suggest that the student with talent and ability to apply himself has no need of a class. For the potential writer, the class may be his means of discovering his ability, of speeding up self-criticism, of accelerating his understanding of techniques and forms, of determining whether he wishes to go on with writing. Mark Harris of San Francisco State College writes: "I have the feeling that for many students this course stands just between them and their beginning a novel; or between them and their discovery that they don't badly enough want to write a novel." Only one instructor whom I questioned stated that his course was "aimed quite completely at the development of writers, . . . to create works of art." Many felt that at any rate, the talented writer would not be *hurt* by the class; some, that they could do "nothing for the very gifted student or for the one who had no gift at all"; most, that the class's contribution to talent was a speeding up of discoveries that real talent could eventually make for itself.

Reed Whittemore of Carleton College says that creative writing courses should not be for creative writers: "I am convinced that no writing school or writing teacher has any business saying or suggesting that he is in a position to provide a Way In. In no other profession is the Way In so exclusively the responsibility of the person who wants to *get* in."[1]

If few writing teachers make claims of a significant contribution to the making of *writers*, many are assertive about what their class can do for *students*. First of all, something *can* be done to help the student improve his writing, and in the process he can widen his capacities in reading, criticism, literary craft, and human awareness.

While he is learning to recognize his own shortcomings as a writer, he is also learning to read in a way that is probably new to him. Chad Walsh says of his course in the writing of poetry at Beloit: "The course is based on the assumption that one learns to write poetry by reading it, and learns to read poetry by writing it." The methods and disciplines of a writing course are immersion into literature as organic process, as a *becoming* according to inherent principles, and out of the course can develop what Brewster Ghiselin of Utah calls the essential ability of the reader: "the ability to experience literary form as meaning." Whether or not the student writer ever achieves unity of form and meaning in his own attempts, he has been forced into recognition of the central importance of this unity to writers whose art he may merely have taken for granted. What student who has ever struggled for the right way to get a story told can thereafter blandly assume that *Emma, Wuthering Heights,* and *Middlemarch* were born full-blown in calf and gold sets between a pair of bookends, or in neat little Everyman editions in the college bookstore?

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[1] Reed Whittemore, "Aesthetics in the Sonnet Shop," *American Scholar*, *28*, 3 (Summer, 1959), 352.

Writing teachers' emphasis on the importance of their classes to the students' reading ability suggests that "creative writing courses" might more acceptably be called "creative reading courses." For it is precisely the ability to read as if he were a creator that the student can learn. John Husband of Tulane writes:

> It's a looking behind the scenes, seeing a story, novel, poem, from the writer's point of view, instead of from the reader's or the literary critic's. . . . There aren't many writers, ever, anywhere, but most of the rest will never read a book or see a play the same way, in the same dimension—again, after this experience. This addition of a dimension to awareness I think is the central worth of the course.

As the student is forced to be a judge of his own writing inadequacies, as he learns to read with greater awareness, so too, inevitably, do his critical faculties acquire—if not always a sharpening—at least a limbering up. The first step may be, as Mary Curran of Queens College states, that the class "teaches a very healthy respect for good writing." It can teach a "professional" attitude toward writing, a recognition that getting by, praise, or a secure B is not enough if the story or poem is not right, an attitude that is no necessary part of a literature class. And the very method and content of most writing classes is a demand that a student exercise and define his critical judgments. Says Reed Whittemore:

> For all its inevitable bumbling, it [the writing class] is vitally and continuously concerned with problems of literary taste as other courses are not. In it, as in no other course, the assumptions and conventions upon which our poetry rests become more than academic—become, in other words, matters either to be accepted and lived with intimately, or rejected as impossible to live with.[2]

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[2] *Ibid.*, p. 351.

The "content" of the writing class, the knowledge of forms and techniques, can undoubtedly be learned in literature classes—but again, tangling with a sonnet of one's own leads inevitably to more intimate knowledge than does memorizing a rhyme scheme of Sidney. Among a number of teachers, there seems to be some hesitation about stressing technique or craft. Correspondence schools and books on How to Write for Profit build up a defense against educational methods that hint of formula. It is unlikely, however, that total disregard for craft can ensure that sensibility will pass for art. Sean O'Faolain, a writer of fiction as well as a critic and teacher, lists what he would expect students to learn in his writing class: "How an object is made. The various ways in which it can be made. Critical alertness to construction. Freshness in writing." Most teachers of verse would expect "how an object is made" to be central to their instruction, and every teacher of playwriting would stress principles and techniques of play construction. It is more often the teacher of fiction who is apt to feel that art and craft are antithetical in the classroom, who would consider his pedagogic role the judging of the students' ability to "bounce" (in E. M. Forster's word) the readers into acceptance. A reasonable justification for the avoidance of teaching by "rules" comes from Wendell Berry, another writer of fiction:

> I try to avoid formulas and definitions relating either to genre or to method. Instead of defining what a short story *is*, for instance, and stating its rules, I try to incite some interest in what can be done. From the students' point of view, I think this is good; it throws the responsibility for the quality of performance onto them, where it seems to me it belongs, and it may force them to reckon more immediately with their own capabilities. But it subtracts a good deal of definition and authority from the teaching function.

The final—or perhaps the first—goal of the writing class is an enrichment that is not specifically part of the art or discipline of writing. Paul Murray Kendall of Ohio University says that the student should gain "a heightening of perception leading to deeper realization of the value of experience and a more knowing and sensitive exploration of that experience; this seems to me much more important than increased skill in writing fiction."

And Theodore Morrison of Harvard writes: "Can't we hope students will know more, feel more, understand more, have a somewhat enlarged conception of things to bring to farming or chemistry or housewifery?" It may be stated that knowing more, feeling more, understanding more are the goals not merely of the writing course but of all education. True. But if the writing course makes a contribution to those goals, it is earning its right to appear in college bulletins under Arts and Sciences rather than under Function and Uses of the Typewriter.

To the question, "Come now, can you really teach creative writing?" Wallace Stegner gives the answer, "Of course you can teach creative writing—to people with talent."[3] But the fact is, many writing courses for undergraduates (including a number in Mr. Stegner's program at Stanford) are open to any student who can get his name on a list before the class is filled. The assumption must be that even if *no* student in the class turned out to have any talent for the writing of a story, a poem, a play —and thus creative writing could *not* be taught—the class would still be justified.

Difficult as it sometimes is for a teacher to define his role in a class of "talented" writers, it may be even more difficult to define his role in a class of "untalented" writers. He may say to himself that although no real fiction or poetry will come out of the class, yet the students will have learned something about literature, about experience, about life, about themselves. How is he to bring this about? Is he to teach craft, or stimulate interest in self-expression? Is he (by some magic) to remove stale habits so that students see life and language and literature directly, with fresh eyes? Or is he (by another kind of magic) to instill in them a realization of inherent form? It is begging the question to say that the "great" teacher probably does some of all of this—and more.

The teacher begins with the assumption that all students can be better than they are. Although their work may never reach the Platonic Ideal of the poem or story as art, it can, with intelligent effort, be less far removed from that ideal. Within this movement of bad to less bad lie the possibilities of knowledge.

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[3] Wallace Stegner, "To an Anonymous Admirer," *Sequoia*, Spring, 1962.

There are those who believe that the process works best when least controlled or interfered with by the teacher. That is, the only assignment would be: write three stories during the semester. When the stories are turned in, they are read and discussed by the teacher and the class. The method has worked for advanced classes; in the elementary class it comes up against the vast problem that the student of seventeen or eighteen, whether he takes the course out of mere curiosity, the need to meet a requirement, or a sincere desire to write, very rarely knows that he has anything to write about. He may produce a story, but it is almost certain to be derived, "literary," false. To assign him work that he cannot possibly do is to argue that since the initial effort is apt to be bad, let us make certain that it be as bad as possible.

The other extreme is the belief, born, no doubt, of painful experience, that the student will find his material and his form through the guidance and discipline of a fixed schedule of weekly assignments. Thus Edward Weismiller of Pomona starts out by assigning a short story so that he and the students can discover what they mean by a story; then follow weekly assignments throughout the term: "Two 400-word descriptions, one of a person, one of a place; a simple narrative in 800 words; a person in a place, 600 words; two 400-word descriptions of the same incident seen by two people; 800-word description of a state of mind." And so on—until a final short story.[4]

The Yale course called "Daily Themes," although it does not give specific assignments, follows a schedule of slogans which point out an emphasis and give a direction. At the beginning, students are told only that the papers must be "creative" writing —not expository—and that they must interest the instructor. Then throughout the term, slogans are asserted, one by one: Individualize by Specific Detail; Vivify by Range of Appeal; Clarify by Point of View; Use the Indirect Method; Characterize by Speech and Gesture; Use Words for Connotation; Unify by a Single Impression. Without interfering with the students' individual responsibility or imposing the formulas which are a horror to the college teacher of writing, the method urges the student along the road of badness to less badness, provides a direction and a discipline (without which no writer can work), challenges the notion that a student best learns to write by being allowed to flounder in his own ineptness.[5]

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[4] A helpful aid in the planning of this kind of short story writing course is Edith R. Mirrielees, *Story Writing* (Boston, 1947), in which Miss Mirrielees discusses various aspects of the story, pointing a direction for analyses and for writing assignments.

It would seem that most teachers of writing are less well organized than Mr. Weismiller and Yale, and they tend to play their class by ear. The initial assignment might be: describe a memorable experience in such a way that the reader will participate in it and will have some sense of why it was memorable to you. Out of this can come anything the instructor wishes. If form is his concern, he can show how some of the experiences are complete in themselves, others are fragments that need a past or a future to complete them; some include only essential material, others are full of irrelevancies. He may wish not even to use the designation *short story*. If language is his concern, he can show that clichés or inexactness or lack of particularity in diction prevents the reader's participating in the action. If he wishes to suggest that fiction must be *about* something, he can show how the memorableness of the experience does or does not communicate itself to the reader.

According to the needs of the students or his own notion of what things should come first, the instructor may give assignments which stress special problems. Relevance, for example, can be discussed indirectly by means of an assignment such as: suggest a person by describing the room he inhabits. Or it can be discussed directly through analysis of a published story.

The satisfaction in teaching beginners is that there is a good deal which the students can be told; the teacher can teach. He can show how methods of characterization work, how point of view functions—or fails to function, how story line sustains itself, how form evolves, how theme emerges. He can point out the use of symbolism in "Death in Venice," the use of adolescent experience in the Nick Adams stories; he can analyze levels of diction in Ring Lardner and Henry James. The student attempting his first story finds all of this so many lights turned on in a dark room.

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[5] Professor Richard B. Sewall of Yale, in a printed speech, "The Content of Student Writing," describes Yale's "Daily Themes." Although the method of the course is specialized, the principles behind it could well be applied to any writing course.

Most instructors stress the importance of students' drawing on their own experience. The assumption is that the student cannot make alive and convincing the experiences (not necessarily events) through which he has not lived. To this, some few would say nonsense: what the student needs is not the pouring out of self but exercise in the use of the imagination and development of skills. Probably what he needs is some of all. Through rather elastic suggestions, the instructor can start him off in one direction or another.

Presumably he ends up with one or more short stories. The stories themselves are apt to be less rich, less spontaneous, more mannered than the exercises leading up to them. But the mark of success is that almost every student in the class will know this, will, in fact, be rather embarrassed by his story. Preconceptions of art inhibit and falsify. The student has generally had too little experience to free himself, but if he can recognize the falsity in his own work, he has indeed learned something about literature, about experience, about life, about himself.

He has learned, too, the necessity of revising—again and again and again. The fierce necessity to match the performance to the vision is itself a teacher, opening up a new understanding of the processes which an art entails.

The beginning course in the writing of poetry would be similar to that in fiction: assignments assist students to find a subject matter and to practice various forms. An initial assignment might be: describe a person, place, or thing in ten to twenty heroic couplets. In succeeding assignments, students try different kinds of poems—narrative, dramatic, satiric—or different verse forms—sonnet, ballade, blank verse.

On the question of allowing students to write anything they please rather than follow a discipline set by the instructor, Theodore Morrison of Harvard wrote:

I was afraid (and still am) of reducing the teaching of poetry to pedantry and the arid intellectual abrasion of analysis and talk, talk, talk. I am an old-fashioned lover of traditional metric. I was afraid exercises in metric would merely result in a hostile class, with which I'd do nothing but fight for an unproductive term. It finally occurred to me that I might enter into a compact or covenant with the class: you jump my hurdles, and I'll read anything you want to offer on your own, take it as seriously as I can, score it to your credit if I like it, hand it back without prejudice if not. Wonderful how the students respond to the discipline of exercises, most of them gratefully. The volunteer poems are with some frequency excellent and welcome—not all just free verse twitches by any means, but things no one would know how to call for in advance.

The compression of poetry allows for its being mimeographed so that each member of the class can have every poem before him as it is being discussed. An extension of this device is to have the class select the poems they like best for a weekly or monthly class magazine. Rolfe Humphries of Amherst appoints three boys each week to come to his house and as an editorial board select the manuscripts which should be mimeographed for class discussion. A student each week reading a brief written review of the selected material starts and focuses the discussion. This is not merely a game of being professional writers and editors; like play production for playwrights, it is a way of impressing professional goals and standards, of making the writing and judging of a poem something different in kind from the fulfilling of an assignment for freshman English.

It is in the teaching of beginning playwriting that we seem to have the most specifically definable goals for the class, and methods that are the most inherent in the materials. The ideal result of the class is a producible play; for those who fail of this, there is the knowledge of theory and craft of playwriting which can be valuable to critic, teacher, writer, playgoer. Although different teachers handle the class in different ways, they all seem to work within the general framework described by A. D. Sensenbach: "(a) theory, (b) examination of the theory as applied in standard plays, (c) application of the theory in the writing of the students' own plays."

With playwriting, as with fiction and poetry, we have the question of "talent" as a consideration in the planning of a course. The elementary courses, open to all students, have one method of instruction; the upper division or graduate courses, open only to students of demonstrated ability, have quite a different one. Thus in playwriting, though the writing of a one-act play may be the final product of the elementary course, the larger part of the term is usually devoted to a study of theory and analysis of craft. The advanced course would reverse the emphasis —the writing and criticism of the students' own work would be the central concern.

Whether required as texts or merely recommended for occasional reference, books on method or collections of plays can suggest the structure of the beginning class. Such books as Kenneth Rowe's *Write That Play,* Marian Gallaway's *Constructing a Play,* John Howard Lawson's *Theory and Technique of Playwriting and Screenwriting,* provide, as their titles indicate, an analytical method and suggested ways to approach the writing of a play. The Modern Library's *Thirty Famous One Act Plays* is a convenient collection by which to test and explore the theories and methods.

During the first meetings, either lecture or class discussion may consider the play as genre and investigate special problems of form, characterization, theme, dialogue, suitability of material for stage. The structure the class is to take, however, is determined by deadlines governing the writing of the students' own plays.

Leighton M. Ballew of the University of Georgia gives a series of major assignments:

a. Turn in a detailed list of characters and describe their relationships and submit a *detailed* (scene by scene) scenario of the play.
b. Class discussion and criticism of the material above.
c. Write a first draft. This is read in class. Then, each draft must be rewritten at least twice before the end of the quarter. A second reading of the play is also given at the end of the term.
d. Each student writes two one-act plays, following the procedure outlined above.

Although Mr. Ballew does not give a "formula" for writing a play, he does stress the necessity of beginning, middle, and end.

The episodic structure he permits only to the fairly experienced student.

For the problem of helping students to find their subject, a major problem in any writing class, Mr. Ballew gives the assignment: "Select a myth and then write a play." Students are challenged, interested, jerked out of that vacuum which can be created by the assignment, *write*. "It acts as a 'springboard' for the student playwright and gets him started. The characters and the period can be contemporary and the names changed. Many of the plays bear little resemblance—about like Eliot—to the original myth." The second play comes "straight" from the student, without use of a myth.

George Quinby of Bowdoin has a similar device: before the student writes an original one act play, he is required to write a dramatization of a short story, a poem, or a news story.

The advanced playwriting class, though it may do some analysis of the full-length play, is concerned chiefly with the writing of plays and is open only to students of proven ability. Since the students have some technical knowledge, because, presumably, they have something to write about, the class can be a colloquium of practicing writers who can profit from the help and criticism of each other.

The major inadequacy of the playwriting course is, to most of its instructors, insufficient time. The beginning class, having to teach theory and technique and to achieve one or two finished one-act plays, sets itself an almost impossible task; the advanced class, though more focused, still demands a good deal in expecting a full-length play to be conceived, written, revised, and ready for production in twelve or sixteen weeks. It might be well if the beginning class had as a prerequisite a course in theory and technique so that it could then devote full time to writing and the advanced class were repeated in sequence throughout the year.

It would seem essential too that the classes be kept small, ideally five to ten, if much writing is to be done. At Stanford, where the beginning class, open to anyone, is apt to be large, the class is divided into small sections for discussion of each other's work. Though this is useful and helpful for students, it does suggest that the overworked instructor must also be divided into small sections.

In playwriting, the instructors who are most satisfied with their results are usually those who are able to combine writing with production of plays. Working with actors and a stage affords a kind of technical, critical, and artistic perception that no amount of classroom lecture and discussion can give; it also develops a professional attitude in the student toward his work. A class of unproduced plays can only with difficulty seem to have been more than exercise or parlor game. At the University of California at Los Angeles, where a large number of original one-act plays are produced in public performance, George Savage has found his playwriting course to be very successful:

> Time and time again I have been able to trace through an exciting creative growth. If the student cannot hold up under the pressures of production, under the tensions of criticism, under the special dedication necessary to find the time, then he voluntarily withdraws. When a capable student with guidance has an opportunity to participate in the production of his and other new plays, he always develops.

If there are no facilities for production of the students' own plays, some way may be found for students to take part in the production of other plays. Joseph Baldwin of the University of Nebraska has revived a national playwriting contest which brings the winning playwright to the university and allows the writing students to participate in the reading, criticism, and production of his play. At colleges where no facilities for play production exist, it would be of some help to record readings of student plays for analysis and discussion. Though not a produced play, the record detaches the play from author so that it can be observed as an evolving experience in itself. I hesitate to suggest a dramatic club; in a college with no drama department, no theatre, the supervisory role in a dramatic club, the overseeing of scenery, lights, and midnight rehearsals, would undoubtedly fall—as an extracurricular activity—to the English teacher who has been pressed into giving the course.

It is the "advanced" class in writing, the class open to selected students on submission of a manuscript, that is the subject of most questioning and most justification. Whether like Iowa, Michigan, and Stanford, the university makes a special effort to attract young writers, or like almost every college of any size in the country, it merely offers a course for students who have distinguished themselves in writing, the advanced course makes an assumption that an art is being practiced, and holds the hope that art may be produced.

The critics say that art cannot be taught, that the university stifles creativity, that the creating of art and the scholarly study of art are separate disciplines which should be kept separate. The justifiers say that a respectable teacher does not pretend to teach art but to offer conditions under which the learning of art may be assisted; that a center of learning can be as stimulating an environment for the creating mind as the more romantically approved Left Bank, Greenwich Village, or North Beach; that the creating of art and its critical and historical study, though they may be separate disciplines, are mutually enriching. Whichever side one takes—and the question is argued with intensity—the fact is, these classes exist in abundance, and, one must assume, they are here to stay.

The role of the instructor in this kind of class is an ambiguous one and probably every man who conducts it is relieved when he can also give nineteenth century novel or Elizabethan lyric, with a defined subject matter and a perceivable method. If he does not *teach* the class, what does he do?

First, we must look at the class. It meets once or twice a week, probably in two-hour sessions. If possible, it is small—eight to twelve students. Since the students are expected to have a subject and know something of craft, there are probably no regular assignments except to write. The instructor may, in the first weeks, talk informally on particular problems in writing or discuss published novels or stories or poems. When the students' work comes in regularly, it is almost the entire subject matter of the course.

If these students really *are* advanced, if their work does show talent and knowledge of craft, does the instructor tell *them* how to write their stories and poems? Says Wallace Stegner:

> There are those who do. If he does, he has to assume that he *knows* how to do it, and this implies that he has rationalized his own practice

> into a law of the universe. He risks driving away all those students who are most rebellious and revolutionary in their values and methods, and he risks turning those who submit into highly polished duplicates.[6]

Describing the classroom procedure of his course in novel writing, Mark Harris says:

> We talk. If things go well, I have a student manuscript before us, which I read to the class. We discuss that manuscript—plot, character, exposition, intention, whatever. Praise or objection may range from tiny detail to total conception. I find that if the proper atmosphere is encouraged, students will speak very freely. Often the student then wants to take his manuscript and burn it up, but I tell him he must not do this: he must write the draft all the way through. He may discover soon enough what it's really about. He might find page 1 on page 164.

In no other class, probably, is the teacher's role less differentiated from that of his students. He and students work together as a group, not as pedagogue and disciples. And yet he is essential. Experience has taught him what the students have yet to learn: that he is not there to condemn and correct but to help the author himself discover what it is the story or poem means to do. Whether or not he is better read than his students, he is better trained at extracting from literature those ideas and methods from which the writer may learn. As conductor of the class, he can, with his own standards and the atmosphere he creates, set the tone of the class. Whether he is venturesome in his taste or cautious, allows the sloppy prose of spontaneous writing or insists on the correctness of a standard English, responds to the exquisite phrase or the total concept, values more highly the work that finds a publisher or that which finds truth to its own aims, he is, if not teaching, contributing a good deal to the process of learning. If one is willing to grant the class at all, certainly the teacher's influence, not dogmatism, should be felt.

Wallace Stegner writes:

> The good writing classes I have listened to or participated in have suggested well-defined standards without enforcing them, have given

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[6] Stegner, *op. cit.*

anything a hearing and a chance to prove itself, have withheld judgment until judgment seemed to grow from the class itself. It is a Socratic method and excruciatingly difficult.[7]

Individual conference is an important part of the advanced writing course, so important that some would disband class meetings altogether. With an inferior group, the loss, perhaps, would not be great, but even so the student would lose something of value. In the learning stage the writer can be helped by communicating with his peers—seeing how they write, how their minds work, and above all, how they respond to his own work. Merely to watch the interest thermometer while his story is read may help the student as much as anything.

It is the group experience which detaches the student from his work, allows him to see it with unprejudiced eyes, form judgments, find the areas that need revision. A frequent problem of the student writer is that he hasn't seen where his story lies within the materials he is using. Group discussion, without rewriting the story for him, makes the student see that these are the relevant details, not those; that here is the proper emphasis, not there. If the group is superior, its discussion of the work is at least as valuable as the instructor's contribution.

The superiority of the group need not be merely a matter of chance: the talent which makes writing teachable can be attracted—must be if the course is to be based on the assumption that an art is being practiced. "The writing program at the University of Iowa," writes Paul Engle, "does not offer something to all seekers. We believe that you can teach only where something in the mind is waiting to be taught."[8] These minds with something waiting in them are going to congregate at colleges which offer a program and a community conducive to creative work.

The greatest attraction is probably the man who gives the course, and where you find a Paul Engle, a Wallace Stegner, an Yvor Winters, an Archibald MacLeish, an Allan Seager, a Mark Harris, a Walter Van Tilburg Clark (the list is long and distinguished), there you will find talented students.

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[7] Stegner, *op. cit.*

[8] Paul Engle, ed., *Midland* (New York, 1961), p. xxiv.

Money also helps. Stanford's six annual three-thousand-dollar writing fellowships ensure that in any year the advanced writing classes will have a nucleus of near-professional writers. These students raise the level of the class and contribute their talent, their experience, their knowledge to the process of mutual instruction.

Prizes, such as the Hopwood Awards at the University of Michigan, are the same kind of bait, and the list of published winners of the Hopwood Awards attests not only to Michigan's success in training writers but also to her skill at recruiting writers.[9]

The university must offer writers a program which will be evidence of the conviction, as Paul Engle says, "that the creative imagination in all of the arts is as important, as congenial, and as necessary, as the historical study of the arts."[10] In a wide choice of English departments today, master's degrees may be pursued with a specialization in writing. Most of these programs are, like Stanford's, no different from the program in English literature except that the thesis may be a book-length piece of imaginative writing. In addition to this kind of degree, Iowa offers a degree of Master of Fine Arts which allows the student to arrange an individual plan of graduate work with particular relevance to the form in which he writes. Since graduate degrees in English are almost always a step toward a teaching career, it is sometimes argued that any requirements which are good preparation for one kind of English teacher must be good preparation for all. Certainly the superstition persists that when it comes to finding a teaching job, a degree in English sounds more respectable than a degree in Creative Writing. But if a student has an interest and talent for writing the short story, and thus his specialization as a teacher will almost certainly be in contemporary literature, fiction, writing, does it not make sense that he be allowed to emphasize contemporary literature, criticism and aesthetics, the history of the novel, relevant foreign literatures, perhaps, more than *Beowulf* and the Scottish Chaucerians? The rigid requirements of many graduate programs seem to imply that all holders of English degrees are going to teach exactly the same subjects in exactly the same kinds of courses.

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[9] A word on prizes: Stanford discontinued prizes when three or four years of story, poetry, and novel contests showed that results were too frequently capricious: the "best" submitted did not really merit a five-hundred-dollar award; the student of consistent high performance was frequently passed over for the student who had managed one lucky success. The prize money is now used for grants-in-aid to resident students of demonstrated ability and need.

[10] Engle, *op. cit.*, p. xxi.

Apart from allowing imaginative work for a dissertation, Iowa makes no exceptions for the writer in the doctoral program. But this one exception is enormous and so far has not been copied by other English departments. The advantages for the writer in continuing to *be* a writer while he works toward a degree are obvious and great. Perhaps the degree would be justified with a different name: Doctor of Fine Arts (but how does one find a job with *that*?). My own feeling is that the degree of Doctor of Philosophy *means* that a man has written an acceptable book of research, history, criticism, and all the seminars and comprehensives and orals, all those years of hurdles, are merely preparatory for that act. Doing a scholarly book on some subject related to his art needn't injure the artist. It could very well help him.

It seems from the catalogues that colleges are more and more using writers, sometimes established, sometimes of nascent reputation, to teach the courses in imaginative writing. In fact, the concentration of writers in universities has become a rather worn subject for articles since the war, causing despair for American letters in some authors, hope in others. Almost a rarity now is the young American writer who has had no contact as student or teacher in writing courses. The trend seems to be that if there are enough writers to go around, not only will the writing centers of Iowa and Stanford be staffed—as they are now—with published writers, but the ordinary department stressing literary history and criticism will find the writer-teacher a useful addition.

Admittedly a correlation between a man's ability as a writer and his ability to develop a similar ability in his students cannot be assumed, nor are the writer's special qualifications necessarily denied nonwriters. Still, the writer knows, in a way that others perhaps cannot, the particularity of the creative act, the necessity to find within any project its own determining principles. He alone can know what the process of writing entails, that combination of conscious memory and unconscious discovery, of knowledge and craft and vision and work and chance and critical detachment. And certainly his own experience, his success or lack of it, can be instructive as well as comforting.

There is some danger of overspecialization. Playwrights teach drama, story writers teach fiction, poets teach poetry. A course with a title such as Stanford's "Directed Writing" does not give direction in three forms but only in that which the instructor practices. For the beginning student who has not located himself in any form, this is undoubtedly a loss. Not only is he missing the chance to try his hand at poetry as well as fiction, but he is being arbitrarily separated from students whose creative talents and interests may differ from his.

A good many of these writer-teachers are permanent members of their departments, with graduate degrees and scholarly qualifications for duties other than writing courses. Some are not. The "lecturer" in creative writing, who may—or may not—have academic training, who is probably temporary, whose usefulness to the department is solely within the writing program, may seem an incongruity and a problem among the PhD's who read the dissertations and sit in on the orals. But let him be tolerated and utilized. Let him not be shifted off to a special creative writing department in which he is separated from created writing. It is desirable to keep writing—imaginative as well as expository—within the confines of the English department and to accept the assumption that the study of past as well as present literature, even of genres and styles remote from those the writing students favor, cannot harm their writing and may actually help it.

In addition to those writers who conduct courses and are (more or less) regular faculty members, some departments sponsor a program of visiting writers who come to the campus for a lecture or week of lectures, conferences, and class meetings. Such a program must find its justification in the belief that something is to be gained from a student's being exposed to the mind and personality of a writer-in-the-flesh. An audience that expects information or entertainment from the lecturing writer is frequently, alas, to be disappointed, though quite a bit can be learned about the man who wrote this monumental novel or that frightful little volume of verse. If, however, the visiting writer happens also to be a skilled teacher, he can be an important supplement to the regular staff. Time and circumstance play an enormous part in the meaningfulness of what is said about one's own writing. The teacher can point out a fault week after week, but closeted with the Great Author, the student hears the same fault mentioned and, ah, Light! Truth! Or the author, sharing goals, difficulties, attitudes, can reveal glimpses of what that word "creative" really means. At Stanford, writers in residence for a short or long period consult with students, read manuscripts, speak to small groups. Frank O'Connor, Jessamyn West, Malcolm Cowley, Katherine Anne Porter, and numerous others have been there not merely as visiting celebrities but as an integral part of the teaching.

Of this writing, this discussion of manuscripts, this talk, talk, talk, it is difficult to make an evaluation, to say whether the method works. Always one is faced with the uncomfortable fact that one is offering a class in something that can't be taught. Says Thom Gunn, a poet-teacher:

> Writing is finally a lonely process. What a student can get from such a course is (a) a knowledge of the technical part of poetry, (b) disinterested criticism (very difficult to get from his friends, after all), (c) much practice, and (d) the kind of enthusiasm for writing that always seems to catch everybody up after the first week or two of such a class.

Other instructors, though bothered by the lack of shape and method in the class, feel that at least it works with some and at least it does no harm. One problem, of course, is that its results are so difficult to measure. How does one give grades in a writing course? Does the A go to the student who coasts along on talent or to the hard worker with no talent at all? What does the instructor want? Effort? Improvement? Perfection? Of his grading method, one man writes: "At the end of the semester I put my head in my hands and brood for one minute per student; then a grade for the semester looms up like a glowing light." To specify the standards is not really to be much less subjective, although it may sound more proper. Thus another instructor: "A student's ability to profit by class and teacher reactions, his ability to revise, the seriousness and intensity of his effort, the extent of his improvement and his general ability to produce effective imaginative work—certainly these determine some kind of basis for grading."

Writing teachers would, almost unanimously, do away with grading for the class, and whatever the opinion of the IBM machine on the subject, this would seem a time when man's will should outweigh the machine's. This is not to say that the writing class should be considered no class at all but merely a group of writers gathered together to work along at their own pace, according to their own instincts. If the class seems to lack a precise method, it does have assumptions. Some of these may be: that at a certain point in his career, the writer (student) can profit from discipline in his writing habits, from submitting to an imposed standard of excellence, from learning the traditions of the art he is practicing, from exchanging judgments and opinions with peer writers.

Directors of two "creative writing centers" find proof of success in the writers who have come out of their programs. "Any writing program in a university," says Wallace Stegner, "must justify itself ultimately by its ability to produce professional writers—by which I don't mean commercial writers necessarily." As evidence for Stanford, he could name Tillie Olsen, Robin White, Evan Connell, Thom Gunn, Eugene Burdick, Dan Jacobson, Edgar Bowers, and more. Paul Engle offers the success of Iowa's students and staff as "unassailable facts proving objectively that the university today is an honest and helpful place for the writer to be." And he lists, among others, Donald Justice, Robert Mezey, W. D. Snodgrass, Harry Duncan, Philip Roth, and Vance Bourjaily.

Whether the method "works" is not, probably, for the instructor to say—unless he can speak out of his memory as a student. Few then would doubt the richness of that part of their education which occurred during those two-hour sessions when, with clammy hands and smothered breath, they heard their story read, watched agonizingly for the smile, the show of interest, and then, with final girding of the loins, prepared to meet the attack.

8

ALBERT H. MARCKWARDT

Courses in Language and Linguistics

THE PLACE AND FUNCTION of courses in linguistics and English language within a department of English is an issue which all too frequently provokes an emotional rather than a deliberative approach. This has been aptly illustrated over the past few years by various issues of *College English,* in which partisanship over linguistic questions has sometimes reached a fervent but an unrewarding height. It is to be hoped that this chapter will succeed in discussing various phases of language study in terms so far removed from special pleading or interest that the problems which it poses will be considered judiciously and intellectually. Only in this spirit can the responsibilities which English departments bear for the systematic study of the English language be brought into proper focus.

At the outset one fundamental distinction must be made, namely, between linguistics and philology. The two terms are frequently confused, and a difference between current British and American use often serves to heighten an already perplexed situation.

The term *linguistics* will be used here to signify the scientific study of human speech in all its aspects. This embraces the sounds, the inflections, the syntax, the writing system, and the lexicon, the latter considered from the point of view of word formation and origin as well as meaning. Both the contemporary and the historical stages of a language come under the purview of the linguist, who, by means of comparative techniques, pushes back through time to a period prior to the existence of written records. Yet, important as the written record may be, the linguist studies the spoken language with equal, if not greater, interest. Nor, when concerned with the past, does he confine himself to literature; nonbelletristic materials may be quite as germane to his interests. In short, everything that is written or uttered—infant speech, place names, slang, the damaged speech of aphasics, calls to farm animals—all have their place and their value in a study of the patterns of verbal behavior on every level of society.

Philology, on the other hand, is a study of culture as revealed in language rather than an analysis and description of the language for its own sake. Some dictionary definitions limit the realm of the philologist to the cultures of civilized peoples; others would confine him to the consideration of written records. At all events, the materials for philological study appear to be literature, religion, mythology, and folklore, and the language in which these are transmitted. But the philologist's concern with language is indirect rather than direct; he studies it as a means rather than as an end in itself.

An important reason for making this distinction between linguistics and philology is to be found within the English departments themselves. Those staff members whose primary interest is in literature often find themselves quite unwilling to follow current research on the English language. It is couched in what is to them unfamiliar and often mystifying terminology. It rests on assumptions and proceeds according to methods about which they know very little. This is due in large part to the impact of such pioneers in structural linguistics as Sapir and Bloomfield, who tended to align the study of language with the social sciences rather than with the humanities.

Such an alignment is in marked contrast to the situation earlier in this century when a Brandl, a Sievers, or a Kittredge, with more of a philological than a pure linguistic bent, was equally capable of dealing critically and perceptively with the works of the great English men of letters and analytically with the development of the language in which they wrote. The second quarter of the century was characterized by increased specialization on the part of both literary and linguistic scholars. The price we have paid for this is lack of communication between students of literature and students of the language. Reopening the channels of mutual understanding must be one of the prime objectives of English studies and English departments over the next two or three decades.

Linguistic studies have been described as embracing the scientific study of human speech in all its aspects, as an end rather than a means. To the extent that they serve this aim, they are not a primary responsibility of an English department. Unless they deal specifically with the English language, courses in general linguistics may quite as properly be offered by one of the foreign language divisions or perhaps a department of anthropology or philosophy, as they are in many institutions. They are not in any sense an academic responsibility which in English department must necessarily assume. Yet, such offerings do appear under English department auspices just often enough that they cannot be wholly ignored here. They will be treated briefly, however.

Linguistics courses of a general nature, that is, not presented in terms of a specific language or language family, usually include an introduction to the discipline, courses in phonetics, morphology or morphemics, syntax, and possibly language typology. Work in linguistic geography, in field methods, and in the use of such electronic devices as the sound spectrograph or the voice analyzer is somewhat less frequently available.

General linguistics may be thought of as serving three purposes in an undergraduate curriculum. First, there is the obvious and direct one of training for the graduate school potential teachers of the subject and research scholars in the field. Only a fraction of the thirty-five hundred or so languages of the world have been competently dealt with. The time is propitious for the reduction of many languages to written form, coincident with the emergence of new nations and the necessity of distributing information concerning public health and agriculture. These tasks will require the devising of alphabets. The sheer gathering of data for hundreds of languages is a task of immense magnitude. One of the reasons for the current shortage of manpower in linguistics has been the dearth of undergraduate programs in the subject. Most linguists have had to begin their specialization at the MA level. The situation is sadly in need of correction.

Another important use of linguistic knowledge lies in its application to the teaching and learning of languages, both one's native tongue and those foreign languages which an individual may need to acquire. Over the past twenty years, the value of linguistically oriented language teaching materials and linguistically sophisticated teachers has been demonstrated many times, particularly in teaching English as a foreign or second language and in the teaching of the so-called exotic languages.

It is not that the alert or experienced language teacher—or English teacher—is incapable of employing effective teaching methods without a knowledge of linguistics. Many of them do very well indeed, either as the result of a long process of trial and error or from the intuition that marks an outstanding instructor. But linguistics, if it can do anything, substitutes a systematic process of identifying teaching difficulties and an ordered philosophy of classroom procedure for what must otherwise come through the sixth sense of pedagogical virtuosity, which only a few teachers possess.

Finally, as the analysis of perhaps the most distinctively human mode of behavior, the scientific concept of language and language structure merits a place in the *general* educational program of the undergraduate college. Its justification here is that it constitutes a proper study both of man and of mankind. The concepts of linguistic development and the complex interrelationship between language and society are important to every student. They serve to reinforce a sense of cultural relativity, of the existence of pattern in a hitherto unanalyzed aspect of human life. Again, this is not specifically an English department responsibility. In many institutions there has been some difficulty in reaching a decision concerning the most advantageous or convenient locus for the work in general linguistics, whether it should have separate departmental status or be placed within one of the existing departments. If that department happens to be English, naturally a sympathetic consideration of the general collegiate function of this subject is called for. Should an English department be unwilling to make this adjustment in its thinking, responsibility for the work in general linguistics should, of course, be placed elsewhere.

As for the general linguistics courses themselves, little need be said. The last decade has witnessed the appearance of two excellent textbooks for introductory courses in general linguistics: Henry A. Gleason's *An Introduction to Descriptive Linguistics* (New York, 1955, 1961) with accompanying workbook, and Charles F. Hockett's *A Course in Modern Linguistics* (New York, 1958). These, with Leonard Bloomfield's epoch-making *Language* (New York, 1933), give the teacher of an introductory course ample material to work with. Courses in phonetics are well supplied with textbooks, but otherwise, except for Kenneth L. Pike's *Phonemics* and Eugene Nida's *Morphology* (both Ann Arbor; 1947 and 1949), the supply is short for anything beyond the introductory level.

Courses in linguistics may be taught either by means of the lecture method or as problem courses in which learning goes on inductively. The nature of the subject matter would seem to argue in favor of an inductive approach whenever possible. In institutions where native speakers of languages other than English, particularly of languages outside of the familiar Indo-European orbit, are readily available as informants, special research projects in phonemics or morphology are often undertaken.

Our direct concern in this chapter is with courses in English language rather than in general linguistics. Although special curricula designed for the training of teachers are not, properly speaking, a matter for consideration in this volume, there is no blinking the fact that many undergraduate courses pertaining to the English language, and some in the graduate school as well, are specifically required of teacher candidates but not necessarily of all English majors. There is little logic, if any, underlying such a differentiation. Language is the vehicle of literature and an important part of the subject matter of English. If a systematic and orderly presentation of the structure and history of English is so indispensable to the prospective teacher as to constitute a requirement, it would seem of equal importance to whatever other profession the English major is preparing himself for. But because of this existing situation, it is difficult to avoid looking at the English language courses, or at least some of them, in terms of the teacher training function they now serve.

Fifty years ago the language courses in English departments tended to fall into two broad categories. First there were courses, prescriptive in attitude and nature, that sought to reinforce the English major's knowledge of the traditional Latin-based English grammar. The major emphasis was on correctness and propriety. The areas covered included not only syntactic structures but also vocabulary and at times even pronunciation. Courses in "the power and beauty of elegant diction" are on record not only in departments of speech but in English as well. In short, this was the Woolley or Scott and Denney handbook approach elevated to the upperclass or senior level.

The second type of course, more often in the graduate school, was historical and philological in nature. It placed considerable emphasis upon the so-called laws of language change and not infrequently gave more attention to the relationship of Old English to its Germanic progenitors than to the exciting developments in the language of Shakespeare and his contemporaries. Its place in the program of the graduate student was often justified in terms of a supposed scientific discipline. Not infrequently such courses attempted at one and the same time to give the student a reading knowledge of Old and Middle English and to provide him with an appreciation of the literature of those periods as well as to unfold the development of the language in which the texts were written.

Two landmarks, symbolic of a change of attitude toward the function and content of language courses must be recognized in any attempt to survey the programs of English departments. The first of these is the report of a committee appointed by the National Council of Teachers of English to survey the needs of prospective teachers with respect to knowledge about the English language. Published in the December, 1928, issue of the *English Journal*, the report began by calling attention to the considerable gap between a competent knowledge of the English language and the totally unrealistic and inaccurate attitudes and prescriptions of textbooks and classroom teachers. The obvious remedy was the development of a proper course in the English language as part of an adequate teacher training program. Such a course would include a study of the historical development of English pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary, an accurate presentation of current English usage, and a knowledge of the principles of general linguistics.

In 1935 Professor Harold B. Allen surveyed the offerings of 373 institutions in an attempt to determine what impact the National Council report might have had. He found only a handful of colleges and universities offering courses stressing the linguistic principles and content envisaged by the committee. Disappointing as this may have been, it was probably less important than the fact that a committee of distinguished scholars, representing a national professional organization, had made an official recommendation with respect to the content and philosophy of the courses in language offered by English departments.

The deliberations of the National Council committee preceded by less than a decade the beginning of the spectacular advances in descriptive linguistics which were to occur. Therefore, from the point of view of contemporary scholarship, the report was outdated not long after it had been made. Yet, considered in terms of the existing course offerings of most colleges and universities, it was years ahead of its time. This anomaly has persisted and was brought to light a second time in 1955 when a conference session of the Modern Language Association, also consisting of a number of linguistic scholars, was devoted to a discussion of what, in the light of recent developments in linguistics, would constitute an appropriate undergraduate treatment of Modern English and its background.

This time, however, the issue was not so much one of a realistic handling of contemporary usage or even the light which a knowledge of the history of the language might shed upon its current form, but rather the newer concepts and mode of analysis which had developed over the past quarter-century. It was assumed that by this time any course in English structure or grammar would treat the facts of current usage realistically. This conference represented an advance over its predecessor because of its insistence on recognizing the validity and utility of a structural approach to the description of English. Considerable attention was given to the same question by the Conference on Basic Issues in the Teaching of English, which met at frequent intervals during 1958.

As has been done for the earlier National Council report, the curricular offerings of a number of institutions were surveyed, this time by Dr. William R. Slothower, "in an effort to determine what the colleges and universities of the country are doing about structural linguistics." A condensed report of his survey appeared in the December, 1960, issue of *College Composition and Communication.* Dr. Slothower sent questionnaires to 395 colleges and universities and received usable returns from 360. Of these, 211 institutions reported that they required a course in English grammar, at least for teaching majors; and of the 211, nearly one-third indicated that they were giving structural grammar "considerable" or "full" treatment. Though the seventy or so institutions constitute less than a fifth of those originally queried, the number is far more impressive than the "mere handful" of linguistically oriented courses reported by Allen in 1935. The impact of a scientific approach to language has been slow but nevertheless steady, at the expense, it is to be assumed, of somewhat more traditional courses in English grammar.

At this point it would be natural to ask what the difference between the two types of grammar course really consists of, and here I find myself in something of a quandary. My own experience has been confined to the linguistically oriented type of course, and although I have frequently encountered the objections which the traditionalists raise against a scientifically based course, I have never encountered a positive statement of their philosophy.

Some clues to the underlying assumptions of what, for want of a better term, I shall call a traditional grammar course may be found in the course descriptions which appear in college catalogues. One such reads, "Studies in the science of English grammar with emphasis upon its contribution to correctness in speech and writing." Another describes the course as consisting of "a review of English syntax and a study of functional pressures upon the conventional forms of English grammar." I believe that these statements are revealing.

From them we may deduce that an important purpose of the traditional course is to ensure or reinforce correctness in the speech and writing of the student. This carries with it the belief that a study of grammar in its traditional form will sharpen and improve the student's manipulation of the language. Since a clear and coherent manner of writing appears to be dictated by logical principles, no objection to a logically rather than a formally based analysis of language structure is likely to be felt. The content would include a review of parts-of-speech classifications with particular attention devoted to items which do not neatly fit the conventional definitions, phrase and clause structure of some complexity, problems of case such as the cognate and retained objects, of verb tense, voice, and mood with attention to sequence of structures, some complicated problems of punctuation, among other matters. One might expect a somewhat rigid rather than a permissive attitude toward moot questions of usage. If diagraming were to be employed at all, it would tend to follow the familiar Reed-Kellog system.

A course in the structure of English, based upon the principles of contemporary linguistics, would undoubtedly use any one or a combination of the following textbooks: Charles C. Fries, *The Structure of English*; A. A. Hill, *Introduction to Linguistic Structures*; Harold Whitehall, *Structural Essentials of English*; W. Nelson Francis, *American English Grammar*; James A. Sledd, *Introduction to English Grammar*, or the even more recent works in generative grammar, principally *Syntactic Structures* by Noam Chomsky and the *Grammar of English Nominalizations* by Robert Lees. Harold B. Allen's anthology, *Readings in Applied English Linguistics*, might well be used as additional outside readings. On a somewhat less advanced level, any of Paul Roberts' books or the Lloyd and Warfel *American English in Its Cultural Setting* might be employed.

There would be certain common elements in a course of this type. The chances are that it would begin with phonetics and phonemics, giving attention not merely to the segmental phonemes but to features of stress, intonation, and juncture as well. The role of this last in the grammatical system would be emphasized. The traditional names for the parts of speech might or might not be employed, but irrespective of the terminology, the basis of classification would be formal and distributional rather than notional. Such concepts as phoneme, morpheme, allomorph, and immediate constituent, which have emerged during the past twenty-five years of linguistic studies, would be used, at least slightly. Complex structures would be dealt with on the basis of immediate constituent analysis. Some references to recent developments in transformation grammar might be expected. Written English would not be omitted from consideration but would be dealt with in terms of the structural patterns characteristic of the spoken language. Questions of usage would be treated on as factual a basis as possible.

The foregoing descriptions represent, of course, the archetypes of the traditional and the linguistically oriented approach to Modern English grammar. A position between the two polar extremes is not impossible, but on the other hand it is somewhat less than likely because of the points at issue. These need not be treated extensively, but some mention of them must be made.

They center about the foci of attention, the terminology, the adequacy of the description, and the applicability of the approach. The linguist considers the spoken language to be primary, the written language a secondary manifestation to be studied in terms of its deviations from the structural norms of the spoken language. The traditionalist is likely to look upon spoken English as a somewhat slipshod if not corrupted version of the written form. He sees no reason, therefore, for not fixing his attention upon the latter and is likely, moreover, to recommend the adoption of at least some characteristics of written English in speech. It must be confessed that linguists have been somewhat less than convincing in setting forth the rationale of their initial preoccupation with the spoken language.[1]

[1] For more extended discussion of this point, see A. H. Marckwardt, "Linguistics and the Teaching of Composition," *Language Learning*, Special Issue No. 2 (March, 1961), pp. 15–29.

A second issue centers about terminology. The traditionalist not only feels uncomfortable with a host of new terms which seem to him like so much pseudoscientific jargon, but he is equally bewildered by the omission or the changed definitions of those with which he has grown up. He sees little justification for all this; he suspects that it is change for the sake of change. The linguist, on the other hand, considers many of the conventional terms to be defective because of logical circularity in definition or because they represent multiple-based and overlapping schemes of classification. He is, therefore, faced with the choice of redefining the familiar or throwing it out and substituting something else in its place.

The traditionalist is also confused and disturbed when he encounters disagreements among structuralists themselves on matters of terminology and general approach. This confusion has been heightened recently by the vigorous discussion centering about transformation grammar. One English department chairman came away from the linguistics section of a national meeting, "dismayed and somewhat shocked that the forty persons present could not agree on anything, even what a noun was or what denomination should replace the traditional term," so Dr. Slothower reports. Another feels it impossible to "introduce a requirement for a point of view that is controversial even among its supporters."

Such comments fail to recognize that no new discipline arises, nor does an old one undergo basic changes without considerable debate. The study of language is no exception. What the traditionalist fails to see is that the areas of agreement among the structuralists are substantial and that at times, though they may differ on theoretical grounds, their end results are not too divergent. Moreover, a state of disagreement or confusion over terminology is not at all unusual even in the so-called exact sciences, yet the new developments in physics and chemistry have not been ignored on that account. It is possible, also, that many traditionalists forget or are unaware that the conventional grammatical terminology and system of classification have by no means come down through the centuries without change. At one time as few as three parts of speech were recognized, at other times, as many as nine.

The applicability of the scientific approach to the analysis of language, and particularly to the teaching of it, constitutes a further point at issue. To the traditionalist, committed as we have already seen to a prescriptive aim, conventional grammar provides the student with a convenient and logical terminology. Such terms can then be employed in general statements or rules which offer sound advice with respect to what is and what is not correct. Again a comment by one of Dr. Slothower's respondents is revealing in this connection: "It [conventional grammar] is a teachable semi-lie whereas structural grammar is an unteachable semi-truth." This is undoubtedly a greater concession than many adherents of a Latin-based analysis of English would be willing to make, but nevertheless it does reflect their doubts on the score of applicability of the new.

There is also a second question which is frequently raised in connection with the applicability of linguistics to what many members of English departments will consider its major pedagogical concerns, namely the teaching of effective expression and the development of sensitivity to works of literature. Here one encounters the point of view that English teachers, from elementary school through college, are far more interested in the effective use of language than in its systematic analysis, and that this falls within the province of rhetoric rather than linguistics.

Certainly there is something to be said on both sides of this question. It is true that linguists have generally limited themselves to the analysis of stretches of speech and writing no more extensive than the single sentence. Zellig Harris's work on discourse analysis is the rare exception. Likewise the excursions of the linguists into the field of literary analysis have been infrequent and, all questions of merit aside, have not particularly impressed the literary scholars.

The linguist can respond, however, by pointing out that the great rhetorical tradition of the past, from Plato and Aristotle through Quintilian and Augustine to such major eighteenth and nineteenth century figures as Blair, Campbell, and Whately, has been somewhat watered down. To quote from the report of one staff committee which spent considerable time in the investigation of traditional rhetoric as the basis for the present-day composition course, "What had originally been a body of theory that would give the writer assistance in the basic problem of finding something to say had become dessicated into a mere matter of arrangement and rearrangement of ideas assumed to come out of the blue." Nor can we overlook the fact that the great classical rhetorics had as their foundation a competent linguistic analysis, but that the analytical technique which was a superb instrument for Greek and almost as good for Latin is not well adapted to a language such as English. Thus the situation would seem to call for cooperative endeavor on the part of linguists and rhetoricians.

The linguist does place considerable faith in what he believes to be a competent and perceptive analysis of the language. He feels, moreover, that a good analysis will result in an improved understanding of the structure and operation of English. In its turn, such an improved understanding may lead to a more dextrous and more effective employment of the language and should certainly result in the dissemination of less palpable nonsense about the language on the part of those who teach it.

Although this may be true in principle, it remains to be proved. Up to the present, more linguists have concerned themselves with the pure science than with its classroom applications. Secondary school and beginning college textbooks based upon structural principles are just beginning to appear. There have been few experimental programs employing structurally oriented materials from which conclusive evidence as to their effectiveness may be drawn. Without question, the next few years will see marked improvement with respect to linguistically oriented textbooks and pilot projects.

We must not, however, confine our discussion of courses in the structure of the English language to their place and function in the overall preparation of the prospective English teacher, or for that matter of the English major who may or may not intend to teach. Such courses can and should be treated in terms of their contribution to general education.

A course in the English language or in the nature and structure of language can, if properly presented, justifiably be considered an important element of the study of mankind. Proceeding upon the premise that it is language more than anything else which sets the human being apart from the rest of the animal world, we are then justified in considering the study of language as basic and fundamental to all humanistic studies. What, then, is the precise contribution that we expect such a study to make to the general, or perhaps more properly the liberal, education of the student?

First place might well be given to the realization that since language is one of the focal points of human culture, it must, therefore, be considered in terms of its relationship to other cultural foci of human society. Furthermore, since language is a self-contained system, it is important for the student to understand that it lends itself to rigorous analysis and consistent and economical description through the employment of techniques based upon accurate observation. In the changes in patterns of distribution, observable by comparing earlier stages of the language with the present, or by comparing different regional forms at any one time, language may be seen as dynamic and as reflecting certain of the cultural facets of the time and place in which it is spoken. Through an appreciation of its responsiveness to social forces and of the manner of its functioning as a social tool, the student is enabled to arrive at an understanding of how a language, in any one period in history, limits the literary artist on the one hand and how it furnishes him with an opportunity to exercise his originality and his genius within those limits on the other.

One type of course which is particularly well suited to demonstrate the relationship between language and its social and cultural background is that which deals both descriptively and historically with the English language in the United States. A number of institutions now offer courses of this nature, usually bearing the title "American English." The following description of such a course, taken from a current university catalogue, is fairly indicative of the content and approach: "The English language in America since the seventeenth century; development of distinctive characteristics of vocabulary, pronunciation, and grammar, and establishment of regional variations in the United States."

The range of topics listed here leads naturally to a consideration of the cultural influences on language. Those parts of the lexicon which mark American English as distinct from its British counterpart also reflect many facets of cultural history which are peculiar to the American scene. Borrowings from such other languages as French, Dutch, Spanish, and German are reminiscent of colonial rivalries and immigrant incursions. One cannot think of American place names without being reminded of the original inhabitants of this continent. The retention of words and meanings which have disappeared in the English of the mother country is indicative of an adherence to the old, which is not unusual in countries which began as colonial offshoots. Some of our word coinages and shifts in the grammatical function of words betray our impatience with and lack of regard for tradition. American differences from standard British pronunciation are again often illustrative of our adherence to older language practices. At the same time, no treatment of the two types of pronunciation can possibly overlook differences in stress and intonation, thus affording an excellent opportunity to demonstrate the importance of these suprasegmental features in the overall linguistic structure.

Similarly, regional variations in American English are easily connected with regionalism in American life and letters. The history of our regional dialects draws attention to such important factors as settlement history, the outward spread of influences from cultural centers, the effects of climate and physical environment.

A course like this can become an important element in an American Studies program, and if it is deftly taught, can make a significant contribution to the general education program of an undergraduate college. Indicative of the growing importance of the subject is the fact that it forms the basis of two of the more recent so-called "controlled research" textbooks.

Some English departments, particularly those in large institutions, may offer one or more courses in phonetics. These may be designed to teach the student the use of some form of phonetic transcription, deal with the movements of the speech organs involved in the production of sounds, possibly even with the acoustic branch of the science. Much as the courses in grammar, they range from the purely descriptive to those which seek to improve articulation and diction.

The second general or broad type of language course for which an English department assumes responsibility is that of an earlier period of the language. Courses in Old and in Middle English fall into this category. Courses of this nature may be expected to accomplish three aims: to enable the student to read the language of the period; to give him some acquaintance with the literature in the form in which it was written; to furnish him with one or more anchor points from which he may approach a study of the development of the language.

Naturally the course in Anglo-Saxon or Old English poses the greatest number of teaching problems and is often the most difficult for the student. Many of the difficulties arise from the nature and organization of the typical Old English textbook, which is usually a combination grammar and literary anthology. In such a text the grammar is usually presented in logical rather than pedagogical order. The phonology is dealt with first, often in terms of successive periods from Indo-European to Old English, and within each of these the vowels long and short, the diphthongs, and the consonants are considered in turn. Next, the morphology is taken up according to the individual parts of speech, declension by declension, conjugation by conjugation, often subdivided on the basis of stems which are no longer visible in the Old English forms but which were present in Germanic. Syntax is generally dismissed with a few brief generalizations. The mode of presentation follows a fixed scheme of organization used for all of the early stages of the Germanic languages. For reference purposes this is very convenient.

What makes a well-charted and compactly organized reference work is by no means the best or most effective arrangement for teaching purposes. In many old English courses, this compact organization of the textbook has tempted instructors to spend the first three or four weeks in trying to cram the essentials of the grammar into their students' heads, after which they devote their attention to the reading selections which are included in the texts. This would seem to violate every known principle of language learning, even though a receptive rather than a productive command of the language is the aim of the course.

Sound language pedagogy demands a piecemeal presentation of Old English grammar, not unlike that which is to be found in a good modern-language textbook. The features of Old English structure should be presented in such an order that the student can begin to read simple text selections as early as possible—artificially constructed or controlled materials if need be. As the student encounters irregularities in the inflections and conjugations, he should be introduced to the sound changes which are responsible for them. The third conjugation of the strong verbs provides an apt place to explain the process of breaking. Gemination will account for the irregular behavior of consonants in the first class weak verbs. Such an approach is not only less confusing to the student but will serve as a basis for the understanding of linguistic change. It introduces him to a point of view and a series of concepts which he will need in order to study the history of the language later on.

There have been a number of attempts recently to analyze Old English according to structural principles, although these have for the most part been confined to phonology. On a number of matters, such as the phonemic status of the fricative consonants, almost everyone would agree. Other points are still highly controversial, as for example the status of *æ* and *ea*. Thus far little attention has been given to the morphology, although it would be quite possible to present a synthesis of the strong verb conjugation which would represent a considerable gain in economy and consistency over the conventional seven-class division. Currently the textbooks reflect little of the structural approach, but it is only a question of time before they will begin to do so. It is to be hoped that such new text materials will maintain the fundamental distinction between a reference grammar and a teaching text and that they will be committed to board covers and letter press only after careful classroom experimentation.

For the majority of students a knowledge of Old English is a tool rather than an end in itself, enabling them to read the literature of the period in the form in which it was written. Modernized versions of the great homilists and the poets of the period amount to little more than a thin distillation of the qualities of the original. However, if the student is to attain the ability to read Old English prose and poetry with some appreciation of literary quality, he must be trained to do so. We cannot expect him to derive any satisfaction from his reading if he is forced to look up every fifth word in a dictionary, and if after he does this, he is still uncertain how the conglomeration of lexical items before him fits together to make a sentence.

Proper training for such adeptness in reading means that he must be given practice in recognizing Modern English reflexes of Old English words. He must be encouraged to derive meaning from contextual clues. He must be helped to see the underlying organization in complex rhetorical structures, that he may recognize in the first sentence of Alfred's Preface to the *Pastoral Care* evidences of careful patterning rather than stream of consciousness writing. He must be alerted to the various ways in which writers achieved that most typical of all Anglo-Saxon rhetorical devices, understatement. He must be made sensitive to the frequent paradoxes and oppositions underlying compound formations and kennings. Sensitivity to the qualities of Old English style can be achieved but only if the teaching proceeds according to a plan.

What has been said here with respect to the course in Old English would apply also to other so-called period courses in the language. In general, Middle English is less remote from the language of the present day in vocabulary and structure than is Anglo-Saxon, although some selections with considerable literary merit are by no means easy to read. The difficulties with a course in Middle English arise principally from the increased time span and greater variety of the material, both as to content and the number of dialects which will be encountered. At times, also, the surface similarity of Middle to Modern English is deceptive and the student fails to see that an innocent appearing *do* is really a causative rather than an emphatic, or that a *may* indicates ability rather than possibility. Much of the teaching problem here consists of developing a sense of caution on the part of the student which will protect him from misunderstanding and misinterpreting what may seem to be self-evident and apparent.

One omission from the language work offered by most English departments is a systematic treatment of Early Modern English. The reason is clear enough, of course. By 1550 or 1600 the language had taken on a sufficient number of features which are characteristic of the language today that little stands in the way of at least a general comprehension on the part of the student. Yet it is difficult to follow the logic of a fairly general insistence upon reading Chaucer with the sounds of Middle English but an unwillingness to devote any attention to the pronunciation of Shakespeare. An awareness of the situations which normally called for or permitted the informal *thou* as compared with those which demanded *ye* or *you* would illuminate and suggest overtones for many a passage in the Elizabethan dramatists, as would a systematic presentation of what is known about class dialects at this period. This, too, was the time when theorizing about the language began; and debates raged over propriety in vocabulary and diction. One is faced here with the choice between incidental explanations of linguistic points whenever they may be apt and a systematic presentation of the language to serve as a background for the study of literature. It would be interesting to see the latter alternative given an honest trial.

The third type of English language course is the historical survey. It is offered at various levels of instruction, at times as early as the sophomore year and sometimes at the doctoral level. Undoubtedly the biggest issue that arises in connection with such courses centers about the question of including or excluding considerations of literary history. In many departments a course in Old and Middle English actually serves the dual purpose of a linguistic and a literary survey, even though the catalogue description of it may give the impression that it deals solely with language. In general the problem does not arise with respect to the language and literature later than 1500.

There are difficulties inherent in the dual purpose course. To begin with, the materials which are the best illustrations of the language of a particular century or region are not necessarily those of the greatest literary merit, and vice versa. The linguistic specialist is not necessarily the most able interpreter of the Arthurian romances, nor is the expert on medieval satire always at home in discussing the relative roles of analogy and sound change in the Middle English developments of the strong verb conjugation. Moreover, a proper understanding of the literature of the Old and Middle English periods, particularly with respect to the history of ideas and the development of literary forms, must inevitably lead to the consideration of writings in Celtic, Latin, Scandinavian, and French. As a consequence, in such a course either the linguistic or the literary objective is likely to be slighted. Ideally, there should be separate courses in the development of the language and in the literature of medieval England.

A course in the history of the language should be brought up to the present day. This means attention to Early Modern English, to the English of the eighteenth century and to the special developments which account for the features which are peculiar to American English. There is often a temptation for instructors to become so involved with the loss of inflections in the late Old English period, or with the complexities of Middle English dialects, that the great vowel shift and the end of the semester descend upon the student simultaneously. To permit this to occur is to sacrifice immediacy of application.

Likewise, the course should look forward to the present rather than backward to the relationship between the various branches of Germanic or the families of Indo-European, at least for the student who is not a specialist in comparative linguistics. The syntactic developments of the fifteenth century and onward can be of direct concern to any student of English; the distribution of schwa secundum and the mysterious disappearance of the middle vowel in certain first class weak verbs in Germanic are intriguing problems, and their solutions are ingenious illustrations of the possibilities of the comparative method, but they are, nevertheless, somewhat remote from the concerns of most students in English.

One way of avoiding the time gap between the modern period and the ending point of the historical course is to begin with Modern English and work backward. This suggestion was made in a minority report of the 1928 committee of the National

Council of Teachers of English, referred to earlier in the chapter. The plan has two advantages. The student works gradually from the form of the language most familiar to him to stages which become progressively less so as the course proceeds. This is especially helpful when the students in a historical survey of the language have not had an initial exposure to Old and Middle English. The other advantage is that no matter at what point the end of the semester or year overtakes the instructor and his class, there has at least been continuity in what has been covered. The disadvantage is that developments in phonology and to a degree in morphology do not permit as clear a charting as if they were approached from the other direction. The backward or reverse approach is probably more satisfactory for an undergraduate course than for one offered on the graduate level.

The question of relative emphasis upon various aspects of the language also arises in connection with the historical survey. How much time shall be devoted to the vocabulary, the sounds, the inflections, and the syntax? To what extent should attitudes toward language and contemporary concepts of language at the various periods be dealt with? What attention should be given to social and cultural backgrounds and their relationship to the developing language? Does etymology have a place in the course?

The answers to these questions depend in part upon the level of the class, the individual interest of the instructor, and the nature of the textbooks and reference materials which are available. There can be little doubt that word origins and changes in meaning have an almost universal attraction. Consequently they can be used to advantage to stimulate interest at the undergraduate level and may appropriately occupy a somewhat larger share of such a course or one designed for the nonspecialist. But even here attention should not be confined to the curiosa, to the strange and exotic. The fact that English has borrowed certain words from Turkish or that *nice* once meant silly or foolish is not particularly valuable in itself. Our real concern should be with the behavior of foreign words after they come into the language: how they adapt to the English phonemic pattern, the inflections which they acquire, the combinations into which they enter, the functional changes they undergo. If these matters are given their proper measure of attention, then the student is learning something about the systematic aspect of language. If the kinds of words taken from a particular language are considered in terms of the time of borrowing and the nature of the contact between the two peoples, some significant conclusions about the relationship between language and social background may be drawn. If the development of *nice* is connected with that of other counterwords or intensifiers, the types of words which underwent this sort of change, the intermediate stages in their various developments, the length of time during which various meanings of the same word were current, again the inferences are of far greater value than the specific fact.

Insofar as it is possible, however, the principal emphasis should be placed upon the development of sounds, inflections, and syntax. It is with respect to these that orderly concepts of linguistic development may best be illustrated and that the concept of a language as a system, or perhaps more properly a number of interrelated systems, becomes most readily apparent. This is not to say that such interesting issues as the debate over diction during the Elizabethan period and the linguistic ramifications of Romantic poetic theory should not be dealt with, but from the point of view of linguistic development these are secondary rather than primary matters.

Textbooks for courses in the historical development of the language are varied in nature and approach. Most common is the narrative account. The effectiveness of such a book depends upon the breadth of learning and the expository skill of the author. A combination of the two qualities, as exemplified in the work of Albert C. Baugh, can result in a very effective presentation indeed. This type of textbook does pose one difficulty. After the instructor has assigned a portion of the book and the class has read it, what is done during the class hour? A mere recital of the essential and important facts seems somewhat less than satisfactory, especially at an advanced level, and yet few books of this kind are provided with study questions or accompanying exercises. A notable exception is the book by Morton W. Bloomfield and Leonard Newmark, *A Linguistic Introduction to the History* *of English*, which does have study questions and exercises at the conclusion of each chapter.

A second type of text is the skeleton outline of linguistic developments. An example of this is Samuel Moore's *Historical Outline of English Sounds and Inflections.* The outline manual is quite likely to ignore syntax and vocabulary either wholly or in part, and again it makes little or no provision for class assignments or recitations. It is useful primarily as a reference guide or for review.

Experience has demonstrated that the greatest difficulty students encounter in a course in the historical development of the language is in recognizing the individual instance as a valid illustration of the general rule. It helps little, for example, to provide them with the criterion of the *-and* inflection of the present participle as an indicator of Northern Middle English if they are unable to distinguish participles from gerunds in the text they are examining. Or to give them a date for the raising of the Middle English midfront vowel to a high front position if they cannot tell the difference between the so-called open and closed *e*. At the very least they should have the opportunity to work with text materials which bear out in specific instances the language changes which are presented to them in terms of general observations. Otherwise the knowledge has little utility, if any. It is even better if, to some degree at least, they work inductively and formulate their own general rules from what they are able to observe in specific texts.

A major difficulty in teaching a survey of the language is in maintaining a schedule which will take the student up to the modern period in the allotted time but also doing justice to the more than one thousand years of development that lie behind the English of the present day. At least a year should be given to the subject when it is taught on the advanced graduate level. A semester is the minimum for an undergraduate course. To try to cover both the history of the language and the structure of Modern English in a single semester course, as is so frequently the practice, is simply to attempt the impossible. Every effort should be made to increase the amount of time devoted to the English language to two semesters at the undergraduate level.

Seminar work in the English language is neglected in many institutions, in part perhaps because many students are inadequately prepared for it. Yet there is scarcely any other division in the entire field of English that is richer in possible topics for research papers. Usage studies come immediately to mind. They can deal with either spoken or written English or a comparison between the two. Structural analysis of various aspects of the language of the present day are another promising area; so are investigations of regional differences. The language of older literary works, or of documentary material for that matter, may be analyzed. Since the beginning of what was once called the "new" criticism, there has been a tendency on the part of literary scholars to focus attention upon the language and structure of all manner of literary works. Very often such critical works are based upon explicit or implicit assumptions about language. It is useful for students to be able to isolate and state such assumptions and ideas. Most of these topics will permit limitation, precise definition, and a clear-cut investigative procedure—all desirable qualifications for seminar papers.

In conclusion, one more question remains to be discussed. What is the justification for requiring or even recommending work in the English language for students whose principal interest is in literature? What, if any, are the advantages in doing so? It seemed desirable to postpone consideration of this question until the nature of the work in English language had been dealt with in some detail.

To begin with, our departments of English are departments of language and literature. Many of them are careful to include both terms in the title. It is obvious that language constitutes the raw material, the medium of literature. Consequently, one approach to both the interpretation and the analysis of literature is through an application of the methods which have been devised for the study of language. This is not to say that such methods are the only way to approach literature. They do, however, rest upon clearly stated premises about the nature and functioning of language, which is not always true of other kinds of literary study. For this reason alone, it is profitable for the student of literature to become acquainted with them.

It is chiefly in linguistics and language courses, moreover, that the student learns to use and to interpret intelligently the principal sources of information about the English language. Too often literary research reveals either an amazing ineptitude in the use of the ordinary reference materials about language or a total neglect of them. Not infrequently composition teaching suffers from the same shortcoming.

If linguistic scholarship is permitted to make its contribution to the advancement of literary analysis on a rigorous and mature level, the end result should be a sophisticated and verifiable stylistics. This would be an indispensable tool for all who are concerned with the teaching of composition and literature as well as those who are interested in the study of the language for its own sake.

9

MURRAY KRIEGER

The Discipline of Literary Criticism

Perhaps no area in the English curriculum has undergone more radical changes since the Second World War than has literary criticism; indeed, only since that time has it become an area. Earlier, literary criticism would hardly have been thought worthy of separate treatment in a book of this sort. Surprisingly, this concern with criticism has shown itself most markedly at the two extremes of the university curriculum—in elementary courses and at the graduate level. What *Understanding Poetry* represents in the recent history of courses in the introduction to poetry, *Theory of Literature* represents in the new awarenesses that graduate training has recently been seeking to impart. Indeed, the increasing influence of the latter served to increase that of the former: that is, *Theory of Literature* helped indoctrinate theoretically those graduate students who were to teach basic undergraduate courses in literature and indoctrinated them in the very way that would make *Understanding Poetry* their appropriate textbook as beginning teachers.

It was of special importance that the final chapter of the original (1949) edition of *Theory of Literature* was entitled "The Study of Literature in the Graduate School" and that the reforms it so urgently called for were the very ones that graduate schools seemed ready to undertake. It especially illuminates the development of graduate education in English to note that in the paperback reprint edition of 1956 the authors eliminated this chapter as no longer necessary, since its reforms had been accomplished and its complaints might have sounded anachronistic.

But was their seeming optimism justified, or is it justified even now? Although literary criticism has received increasing recognition and offerings in it have been welcomed into English departments, to what extent has it really become an integral part of the graduate program and, consequently, an informing part of the attitude of the beginning undergraduate teacher? Although this book is directed primarily toward the undergraduate level, in the case of literary criticism this level is almost totally controlled by graduate school attitudes. So we must ask, to answer the questions I have raised, how extensively courses in critical theory and critical method have been inserted into English department graduate programs. To what extent has awareness of critical method affected the orientation of all graduate courses? To what extent has it permeated the orthodox "scholarly" approaches to literature that control the general program? How professional, responsible, and disciplined has the introduction of critical methodology been? Or, to ask this another way, how much have departments really demanded of those whom they have chosen to introduce critical awareness at the graduate level? I acknowledge my own skepticism concerning the reformation of the upper level English program by presumptuously intending this essay to serve the present academic situation as the final chapter of *Theory of Literature* served its more acute situation.

The teachers of English of the present middle generation became aware—those that did become aware—of revolutionary ideas about the critical interpretation of literature during the 1930's and the 1940's, and most of what they learned came from extra-academic sources. Largely it was the work of those influential "big little magazines" which have since earned their way from the shades of academic unrespectability first to the broad daylight of acceptance and then—unhappily—to the fortress of their own solid respectability. Indeed, academic journals have come to imitate them, to influence them in turn, and, in effect, to forge a common institutional front with them.

It must be admitted that, during these years, the academy also showed occasional signs of a coming change. On some campuses an isolated teacher, like Yvor Winters at Stanford, was gathering about him students who wanted something more discriminating than their courses usually offered. Or an influential scholar-critic, like Joseph Warren Beach at Minnesota, began to gather colleagues whose critical concerns were their primary concerns. Or a scholar of high reputation, like R. S. Crane at Chicago, could reorient the study of literature in a great university. Or an administrator, Norman Foerster at Iowa, could shape a whole English curriculum to a study of values rather than literary history. And there were others. One needs, for example, only to mention the names of Vanderbilt University and John Crowe Ransom. Indeed, as early as 1933, criticism received encouragement from a quarter one would hardly have anticipated, when John Livingston Lowes, as President of the Modern Language Association, called for a new direction to literary study:

> Our scholarship has tended to move, of late years, from the large to the relatively small. Is it, or is it not, time to return on occasion, *by way of the small*, and with all the new light gained thereby, to the larger ends of scholarship. . . ? Is the time not ripe to apply in larger measure both methods and acquisitions to that formative interpretation which illuminates, and which is after all the ultimate end of our researches? . . . For the ultimate end of our research is *criticism*, in the fullest sense of an often misused word.[1]

Lowes' call went largely unheeded: after all, if one of the most respected and most orthodox scholars chose to indulge himself in a presidential address, what harm could it do? And despite the other heterodox movements in a university here and there, for the most part the establishment—the graduate program in English—continued to defend its own.

By the 1940's the new and iconoclastic claims were red meat to an increasing number of graduate students and young teachers who felt that the humanistic motive for their study was being drained away in philological programing. It was a fresh spirit that for several summers shortly after the Second World War brought graduate students from around the country to a small campus in central Ohio. For these pilgrims the Kenyon School of Letters was a shrine dedicated to the humanistic study of literature. They ran as to an oasis and spent their weeks there; their diligence to the critical task was their tribute of thanks for the brief escape from aridity. The summer teachers at Kenyon were, of course, the writers for those magazines that were then changing thinking about literature within the academic walls. But summer students at Kenyon, if they looked closely, would have observed that their teachers were in increasing numbers also becoming university professors and were moving to larger and more impressive universities year by year. And as the years went by, after the Kenyon School of Letters followed suit by becoming the Indiana School of Letters, the uniqueness of this summer place was gradually lost; increasingly its program came to resemble those graduate programs that more and more major universities were adding to their curricula. There need be no oasis when watering places are everywhere—even though spreading them out causes their shallowness to increase with their number.

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[1] John Livingston Lowes, *PMLA*, XLVIII (1933), 1405.

Thus arose the peculiar situation in which young Turks, prepared more by what they had learned outside the academy than by their doctorates, were teaching the most elementary English courses with a critical sophistication that was not always shared nor even understood by their senior colleagues. Since these senior colleagues were in the main defenders of the *ancien régime,* they often sought to perpetuate what seemed to them most valuable—or even sacred—by looking for younger versions of themselves to take over the "scholarly" areas of graduate teaching. Those younger men with less respect for "academic" values were edged into the less prestige-ful, less advanced areas of the curriculum. Occasionally successful publishing records created certain fortunate exceptions even in the most hallowed of historical periods. And some were allowed tentatively to explore new and less traditional aspects of an enlarging graduate program, thus joining those elder statesmen of modern criticism who had earlier been taken into and, to some extent, been taken over by the academies.

Still the irony persisted for a while that elementary courses were being taught at a more mature critical level than most graduate seminars. Even this state of slight fortune could only deteriorate as the revolutionary excitement of those anti-academic days abated, so that the new graduate students, now presumably at one of those watering places that were everywhere but existed in depth almost nowhere, would have neither the fervor nor the extramural guidance. These might manage, in the generation to come, to bring the undergraduate level of teaching down to that of its big brothers. What had promised so much to the institution by being nurtured outside was threatened with the loss of its distinctiveness by being brought inside and absorbed. At best it could only slightly influence the essential form of the institution to which it surrendered. So the apparent incorporation of literary criticism proved to be the most effective possible tactic of the establishment: here was the way to smother it by giving it a minor, unassimilated place. Criticism was absorbed, but not digested. What newer scholar-critics there are in important positions at graduate levels—and I have not meant to claim that there are not a goodly number—are still, on the whole, trapped within a framework that has not been transformed in any essential way by the forces I have been tracing here.

The fate of criticism in the learned journals has been similar. It has been invited in, often to be at the mercy of unregenerate editors or readers who have not learned to discriminate among the new scholar-critics whom history now forces them to admit. So these journals have encouraged—sometimes compelled—criticism to deprive itself of much of its vitality as it conforms to their professionalism by turning itself into exercises in explication, as arid as many of the scholarly exercises it accompanies.

The revolutions that were institutionalized—and thus came to be symbolized—by the accomplishments of Cleanth Brooks and Robert Penn Warren, and of René Wellek and Austin Warren, are indeed far behind us now, and with their victories consolidated. But the problems remain and in subtler form since they give the appearance of having been solved. They are less obviously painful but perhaps harder to cure since our confidence in our catholicity may permit us to mistake conviviality for health.

The desire to be modish is hardly a serious justification for instituting or transforming programs. What are the arguments, apart from those of changing fashion, to support the growing role of literary criticism in the English curriculum? Perhaps in the justification of criticism we may discover its proper objectives. Its primary justification we may derive from those motives that prompted the growth of interest of two decades ago. Through the critical approach to literature, the student can discover the unique subject matter of his field and the unique methods available to him for probing it. No matter what use his particular scholarly interest may lead him to make of a literary work, criticism allows a clear determination of the object he is subduing to his needs—a unified grasp of the thing itself. This grasp can allow him to treat the literary work terminally, thus controlling the instrumental uses of the work; it can transcend and give purpose to those specialized scholarly studies that radiate outward toward extraliterary subjects through the use of extraliterary methods. Criticism thus presents itself as the one peculiarly literary discipline designed to locate and explore what is peculiarly literary in a national literature.

Thus there is interaction between subject and its appropriate method, and this leads to the further interaction between the yield of value and the yield of meaning. The concentration upon the literary object as a special sort of entity whose nature is accessible only by special methods can make the student aware of it as the source and container of value. Such concentration restores to the humanities an area of concern which descriptive or "scientific" interests have sought to undermine and thus *de*-humanize. The student may find that this value manifests itself in the work's incomparable capacity for meaning and in a special awareness of its moment in its culture's history, an awareness which its aesthetic-thematic organization can generate. That is, he may find that its capacity to function as a sign for meanings stems from its functioning as a repository of meanings. At this point the circuit of the unique to the unique is closed: the uniqueness of subject is discovered by (and yet helps to create) the uniqueness of the method it demands (and yet will submit to); together the two yield the unique sort of value that receives its ultimate sanction from the uniqueness of meanings—at once aesthetic and thus suprahistorical and yet in another sense historical after all—which the work in the totality of its discovering and its being discovered can reveal. The maintenance of this circuit will permit the full-scale study of literature, with all its subsidiary disciplines, without the danger that the centrifugal force of extraliterary interests and methods will tear apart the heart of the subject and destroy it as a unified entity.

But this view of literature as *a* subject—a view admittedly conditioned greatly by this critic's desire to defend his own—would find literary criticism as the central coordinator of the studies of that subject, as the queen of the literary sciences as it were. It is in accordance with this view that I earlier found the accommodation of the academy to literary criticism to be so inadequate.

Precisely how much literary criticism has begun to be offered in colleges and universities, what sorts of courses have been initiated, and how do they measure up to the lofty position I have tried to create for criticism? A recent survey by Professor Albert Van Nostrand indicates the answer:

> About four out of seven schools of liberal arts offer some course in literary criticism. This figure is based on the catalogues of 350 schools—about a third of those listed in the latest directory of the American Council on Education. As a basis for observation, these 350 schools are a representative sampling of American liberal arts education. They reflect a broad range in enrollment, course offerings, geographical location, affiliation, and the means of financial support. Most of them offer an undergraduate major in English literature. The catalogues of these 200 schools offering courses in criticism support some further observations.
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> Regardless of their location, state universities offer more courses in criticism than does any other kind of school. Six out of eight present at least one such course. Characteristically, with their large English departments, these universities provide several—sometimes as many as five—courses on different levels at one time. But this is not necessarily

the consequence of enlightened state educational policy. A comparable ratio of courses in literary criticism offered in state teachers colleges makes this clear. Only one out of three state teachers colleges provides a course in literary criticism. Even some of these—called "applied criticism"—turn out to be courses in reading and writing book reviews! That public school English teachers should be kept so innocent of criticism and its attention to the nature of literature is cause for alarm.

According to the catalogues there are varying emphases. Junior colleges show no interest whatsoever in the discipline of literary criticism. City colleges, providing many courses outside of any degree program, have only scant offerings in this field. In the colleges with Protestant affiliations, the subject is more likely to be offered, if at all, by departments of philosophy. In Roman Catholic colleges, courses in literary criticism explicitly emphasize the classics.

As to the courses themselves, the survey is the most familiar. Half the courses in criticism taught each year in the United States are survey courses. From 150 catalogue descriptions, certain standard characteristics of such a course emerge. It is normally a one-semester course (occasionally two). Offered every year, it is taught by a senior member of the department. It is available to English majors, usually in the senior year, but not required. In universities it is a middle group course for both graduates and undergraduates and is usually required of doctoral candidates in English.

This survey may be called a "history" or "principles of literary criticism" or "critical approaches"; in the language of the catalogue these are synonymous. The description of English 462 at Eastern New Mexico University makes the characteristic emphases: "A study of the theory of and practice of criticism from Aristotle's *Poetics* to the New Criticism. The *raison d'être* of criticism itself; the characteristics of criticism as a literary form; the relationships between criticism and the literary masterpieces themselves." Usually, in catalogues, the title of a course appears without further description. . . .

More specifically, the emphasis is on English criticism from the Renaissance through the Victorian period. Augustana College at Rock Island, Illinois, specifies this: "The classical critics are touched upon, likewise the Renaissance criticism on the continent, though the emphasis in the course is placed upon the development of English critical theory as it relates itself to the prevailing thought tendencies from Sidney to Arnold."[2]

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[2] This survey was made for this chapter, which Professor Van Nostrand was originally to have written but was unable to complete because of other

It is obvious that the number of courses in criticism and the number of institutions offering them have increased considerably in these last years; that a survey like Professor Van Nostrand's, if conducted several years earlier, would have revealed much less going on in this area; and that a survey of the situation as of yesterday would reveal even more going on, with fewer schools going without some coverage. The increasing interest is also reflected by the changing styles in textbooks—the invention and endless production of "casebooks" and the multiplication of anthologies of criticism, of glossaries of critical terms, of introductions to the critical study of the various genres (sometimes accompanied by anthologies of literary works or critiques of them).

Professor Van Nostrand's survey should alert us to the unsystematic—if not altogether grudging—manner in which criticism is often permitted its place. On the whole there is a lack of program. What is required, if there are to be more than modish reasons for teaching criticism, is an awareness of how it can be related to the English curriculum. And this awareness is also lacking. Thus the predominance of the historical survey of literary criticism. There could be no shrewder way for the older vested interests to adapt the newly demanded offerings in criticism to the general organization of offerings in the English department. The criticism course could thus share a common historical method and organization with other period or genre courses. Its impact on the organization of the curriculum could be minimized, and the very idea that it offered a principle of organization could be obscured. On the elementary level there could be an increase in the "how to read" courses in the various genres with little danger that these would interact with those advanced courses in the history of taste, ideas, and literary opinion that passed for courses in criticism and critical theory. Here is the split which I lamented earlier between the criticism courses at the two extremes of the curriculum, between elementary

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commitments. I am grateful to him for the extensive researches he conducted, now several years back. I have freely made use of his findings, especially his surveys of courses taught in literary criticism in colleges and universities and of the changing textbook situation in the area of literary criticism.

courses in applied criticism and advanced courses in critical history and theory. This is hardly a rational arrangement, and fortunately it does not exist everywhere. But the exceptions are fewer than many of us have the right to wish.

And what about the teachers for such courses? I have already discussed the junior level teachers, noting that their critical awareness was frequently superior to that of their seniors. The advanced courses, more often than not, are handed to one of the latter as something he might enjoy doing for a while with his left hand, leaving his major energies free for his proper work in a historical period. In fairness it must be admitted that it may not be easy to find a teacher of literary theory at the advanced level since there is little formal training of any extended sort in this discipline. But there is a disposition to believe that almost anyone trained in literary history and capable of reading the texts in the history of criticism is qualified to teach the course. It is, of course, reasonable to argue that the proper teacher of literary theory must be more than parochially English in his literary concerns since, as a systematic study, literary theory can hardly be restricted nationally. And it is reasonable to argue that the proper teacher of literary theory must have a sophisticated grasp of the theory of the fine arts generally, and that this grasp of aesthetics naturally involves a sophisticated grasp of philosophic method at large. These claims would argue that literary theory is a specialized discipline indeed, one requiring a specialized training.

What would be a fuller and more systematic conception of a program in literary criticism? To begin with, such a program must have a double role. First, as a separate group of courses, it forms its own subdepartmental program training future teachers in such a program; second, it must have an influence on the subject, methods, and values of the department's general offerings and organization of offerings. In its first role, it cultivates its own garden; in its second, it uses its theoretical discoveries to contribute to the arrangement of the department's more varied garden. This second role is the more difficult, and in the long run perhaps the more important: it means altering the attitudes toward the reading and teaching of literature for all of us who are practising humanists and defenders of the arts. But this role can be played successfully only if the first, more exclusive role is played well.

How can we best cultivate that separate group of areas that constitutes the distinct program in criticism? There would seem rather obviously to be three of these areas: the history of criticism, the theory or theories that allow criticism, and practical criticism—the disciplined application of criticism to specific literary works. It is mainly through this last that criticism can spread its influence to the rest of the department's offerings.

I have already spoken of courses in the history of criticism, those which—similar in method and objectives to courses in literary history—tame criticism by reducing it to a familiar and conventional framework. As advanced courses, usually elective, they do get criticism into the curriculum with the least jarring of teachers' or students' habits. But they do so at the price of foregoing the chance to create a systematic view of literature and, through this, a systematic view of how it should be taught; such a view might alter the attitudes and organization of the department as a whole. Also lost is the opportunity to relate literary theory to the usual courses in applied criticism, those elementary "how to read" or genre courses that I have mentioned several times.

A systematic view of criticism would require that the history and the application of criticism must be related to each other, and it is obvious that they can be so related only by way of a theoretical approach to criticism. Thus the role of courses in critical theory is central: these must give direction to courses in the history of criticism and practical criticism, controlling these so as to allow them to form related areas within a larger, integrated domain. Of course, giving so central a role to critical theory involves the risk of reducing an entire criticism program to inflexible dogma. Only the liberal intelligence can guard against this reduction, and our self-conscious wariness of the possibility must never be lulled. But the alternative danger, that of having no systematic and controlling view, is great enough to make the risk of dogma one worth taking. This theoretical view will allow for courses in applied criticism at a higher level, thus reducing the disparity of levels that I have noted between practical criticism and the history of criticism. Further, it can reform courses in the history of criticism so that they need no longer be routinely historical examinations of chronologically ordered texts, which pick up their method from other courses in literary history or from an elementary anthology text whose theoretical awareness may be questionable if not utterly primitive.

Let me pause here to describe the course that I have found most successful for transforming the history of criticism so that it serves an objective that is primarily theoretical. It is a two-semester course that could be offered at either the undergraduate-graduate or the graduate level. Although there is much that is historical in its proceedings, its essential organization is intended to be analytical. The first semester is directed toward establishing the central problems of literary theory and examining the solutions proposed to them through the nineteenth century. Reading is mainly in the obvious major documents and the important scholarship surrounding them. Beginning with Plato and Aristotle, the course moves through the mimetic tradition; then, starting again with Plato and Longinus, it traces the expressionist tradition. The teacher should not take these labels too seriously; rather he should show elements of expressionism in the so-called imitationist and elements of imitationism in the so-called expressionist. He might conclude with obviously mixed figures who defy the imitation-expression dichotomy altogether. He can use them to show what in the problems of poetics demands something of each of these traditions, yet also show that the price of mere eclecticism is higher than one should pay without further attempts at systematic resolution. The semester could close with the impasse reached with the early Benedetto Croce at the turn of the century. If the course has done its job, it should have exhausted the possibilities for solving the problems of literary theory—both individually and as parts of an integral subject—within the terms in which they were set through the nineteenth century. The student should see that they were not solved, perhaps that they could not be solved, within these terms.

The second semester examines those critics in our own century who, moving from the earlier exhaustion of possibilities, put their questions in a new way to evade the impasse to which the older imitationist-expressionist poetics had led. The readings are dominated by new versions of the theoretical problems and recommended solutions rather than by merely new representatives of the older and already fully tried formulations. Yet sufficient voice should be given to discordant notes that challenge the cogency of these new versions. This semester will not yield, of course, any last word or final solution or even final setting of the problems, but rather a sense of some advance over older formulations even if an impasse has been reached again. At least one will have reached higher ground before the impasse: certain theoretical traps will once and for all have been eluded, so that we can claim some advances in critical thinking in spite of those traps that yet remain.

Beyond their immediate substance these courses have a methodological objective: to refine the student's ability to theorize and to make him recognize the relevance of this ability to the daily practice of criticism on individual works. The teacher must continually foster this awareness of the relation of systematic thinking about criticism to the practice of criticism and to actual literary works. Further, despite the theoretical orientation of these courses, the student must learn an essential modesty about the claims of literary theory: he must see the "more things in heaven and earth" in every good literary work than any theory can hope totally to account for, and also the values of the great critics despite (or perhaps because of) their theoretical shortcomings. Yet on the other hand, this student must understand the advantages of being aware of theoretical presuppositions behind critical claims, even though a wholly adequate and coherent theory is unlikely to emerge. He can go on to apply his hard-won theoretical awareness to those crucial questions of method that control the courses in the program concerned with the systematic criticism of specific works.

This sophisticated awareness of theory, both its necessity and its limitations, is what many departments fail to achieve when they merely add literary criticism to their other offerings. It is what too many English scholars least want and think least worth having. In short, the defence of literary criticism as an organized program must finally turn on the defence of literary theory as a necessary discipline.

The usual argument against literary theory—and it is advanced as much by practicing critics as by scholars—is obvious enough: literary theory, like its parent discipline aesthetics, has a distracting interest in philosophical abstractions rather than an exclusive interest in discrete works, so that it is just so much baggage imposed from the outside to burden the purity and immediacy of poetic contemplation. This argument springs from a strange form of anti-intellectual snobbery which many critics and scholars of English literature have, in a precious, self-indulgent way, allowed themselves. It is an academic weakness we can term the man-of-letters complex. The venerable position of the belletrist demands that his sensitive dignity not suffer the trivial hair-splittings of the hardheaded logician, the system-making logomachist. Perhaps, in criticism as in philosophy, this is but the traditional answer of the empirical English way to the German way which, goodness knows, can have an inflated stuffiness of its own. It is a disposition that makes even those moderns who have found Coleridge most useful somewhat distrustful of him inasmuch as he was rather in the German style. Consequently, it has produced a scholarly and critical atmosphere that often prides itself on being unlearned in matters of formal aesthetics. And it shows an embarrassed discomfort when faced by claims for the guiding role of literary theory, although it may be a discomfort springing from the threat not to the acute sensibility as much as to the gentleman's ease that wants to coddle its preciosity. So it is that a professor who would insist most severely on the use of appropriate scholarly disciplines in an historical literary study does not demand the equally appropriate aesthetic and philosophical disciplines in a critical study. Scholarship is of course a term broader than history and its disciplines; it relates to any ordered, systematic study and to the mastery of disciplines appropriate to that study in our most demanding conception of it. I am suggesting that the areas requiring mastery of criticism as a discipline governed by scholarly responsibility are other than those which English departments usually assume to be the areas most required for a scholarly performance. This attitude leads to scholarly irresponsibility in critical study even where historical responsibilities are most carefully met.

It must be granted to the scholar-belletrist that, throughout the history of criticism, writers too dedicated to the philosophy of art have afflicted criticism with the misdirections of what George Saintsbury, borrowing from Pope, disdainfully termed the "high *priori* way." It is the way that moderns have referred to as the imposition of "aesthetics from above." Certainly many such writers have been interested more in theory than in literature and have fashioned Procrustean beds, each to his own measurements, instead of doing the more open and empirical job that is rightly demanded of criticism. In such cases the primary concern with the *a priori* to the neglect of the thing itself does construct too "high" a way for criticism to pursue and still remain *literary* criticism.

On the other hand, it is not possible for criticism to proceed in such utter neglect of theory as a Saintsbury might propose. How humbly and unqualifiedly "low" dare we allow sensibility's empirical "way" to become without endangering the critical enterprise from the other direction? Any interest in the aesthetic presuppositions that, consciously or unconsciously, condition not merely our poetic response but even what we see in the poem is, after all, an interest in theory. None of us can, nor should we want to, come upon the poem with a theoretical *tabula rasa,* without some ideas about what we conceive a poem to be or how we think it ought to serve us or we it. We hope that these ideas will remain flexible and will damage the poem for us as slightly as possible, but have them we must. They will limit us, but if we know what they are, we may be better able to force them into flexibility. Strip our perception as bare as we can, in the unguarded moment the theoretical guard resumes its sway. Or will even the most anti-intellectual of us dare assert—while affirming that he is a critic worth listening to—that among his individual judgments of literary works no pattern can be traced? Can even the historical or biographical scholar, who withholds himself from judgment, claim that he makes no assertions about the relation of environment or of personal life to what goes on in a literary work, that he has no hidden assumptions about how literature comes to have its meaning as an expression of what has happened outside it? If we must live with the inhibiting presence of theory, surely it is sensible for us to examine a theory closely to determine whether it will make us a bearable companion as we journey our way through works of literary art. Surely too it is sensible for us to fix it firmly so that it may always show us the same face. In other words, we must examine it to determine whether it accounts adequately for the facts of our poetic experience (even as we acknowledge that this experience is largely conditioned by the theory, whether implicit or explicit), and we must fix it in order to ensure its logical coherence. It is this examination and this fixing that the critical theorist undertakes. If he is acting as a historian of criticism as well, it is this scrutiny to which he subjects the writers under study. The teacher of critical history or of critical practice is the more valuable as he faces up to this theoretical responsibility.

One can insist, then, that every literary critic, and likewise every literary historian, is involved with theory whether he wants to be or not. So the historian of criticism, for part of the way at least, has to take the "high" road. In labelling an antitheorist like Saintsbury an impressionist and a hedonist, we are attempting to place his theory, his high road assumptions. And, from the standpoint of most modern criticism, in applying these terms to him, we are saying that we do not much care for his theory, that we do not think that it permits him to treat adequately either literature or the history of critics or their theories. Of course, although we can trace *a priori* principles, and thus a theory, in Saintsbury's antitheoretical claims, it must be allowed that Saintsbury's is a theory to end all theories and theorizing. His urgent insistence on the primacy and even autocracy of taste and its pleasures—a taste intellectually unguided—can lead only to an insistence on the irrelevance of aesthetics and its disciplines. Yet it is strange to find a similar antitheoretical bias among many influential critics in our own day, even though these never dare to claim Saintsbury's theoretical justification for it. In a T. S. Eliot, an F. R. Leavis, an Allen Tate—whatever the differences among them—we often find a sort of absolutism that must and does reject outright the subjectivism and hedonism of Saintsbury's literary atmosphere even as, strangely enough, it shares with Saintsbury the distrust of theory as an unpoetic intruder upon the intimacy of the poetic moment. But it is as true of them as it is of Saintsbury that, like it or not, they must reckon with theory even as they must live with it. Perhaps, as they sometimes claim, they have no theory. But if a critic manages to hold no theory, he does so at the price of unconsciously holding and presenting two or more theories, even mutually incompatible ones.

It would not seem unwise to be more conscious and thus more critical of the theories we assume. For example, this matter of the incompatibility of theories is a curious one. We have seen that the critic must try for a theory that can most fully accommodate the poetic experiences which, since he is a critic rather than a philosopher, are most precious to him. And, once he recognizes the theoretical problem, his poetic experiences may force him to make changes in his systematic bias. This is only to assert the obvious, that the dictation should not flow in one direction only, from theory to sensibility. But what if all his poetic experience should lead him to what seem to be contradictory theoretical claims—for example, the claim that poetry in some sense represents the world of our experience and, simultaneously, the claim that poetry in some sense is utterly nonreferential, representing only its own contextual world? Must he make up his mind between them and inhibit all future poetic experiences accordingly as he decides one way or the other? If his poetic experience has continually revealed to him the equal truth of both claims, surely he may provisionally hold onto both of them—in full awareness, however, that here is a serious need for resolution which he must try to serve as he goes about future poetic experiences.

It may even be that he will come to feel the ultimate futility of theory in trying to evade the dilemmas provoked by the poetic experiences he dares not forsake. But even so he must earn his right to doubt or even to reject the promise of theory by serving the stern apprenticeship to it. And if he has served well, he will suspect, or at least hope, that in his unhappy conclusion he is wrong—thanks to his own inadequacies. Despite all his trying difficulties, however, how much better off—and how much more useful too—he is than the critic who, theoretically unaware, moves blithely along through what may ultimately prove to be intellectual chaos, all for the sake of preserving the integrity of a sensibility that in truth is everywhere being badgered by another unknown master.

So much, then, for this attempt to justify those awarenesses that should lie behind an organized program in criticism and each of its courses, whether historical, theoretical, or practical in its emphasis. Is this not reason enough for me to have insisted on the variety of areas of knowledge and discipline that I did? Can any responsible scholar who would be a teacher of criticism afford not to be able to trace the relations of his subject to its parent theoretical disciplines, aesthetics and philosophy, and to its brother areas seen in comparative literature and in criticism of the other arts, where generic literary and aesthetic problems, in distinction to merely local ones, may be discovered? Clearly what I am arguing toward is the specialist in criticism, a man trained in a graduate field that involves a difficult combination of disciplines. The field is hard to determine fully and, given the available teachers, harder to cultivate, but it is no less necessary for that. Just as it is no longer adequate to speak of criticism as being a matter of private taste, so it is no longer adequate to see its objectives as being less ambitious than what I have been claiming here, even if there is the danger of ambition being a mask for mere pretension.

If the criticism program can be rigorously pursued, then it can have the diffuse influence on the department's attitudes and objectives that I have spoken of earlier. By restoring a common subject matter to teachers and students of English literature—common to them but unique to a department of literature—it can allow a oneness to what we all do below the diversity of those specializations that radiate outward toward nonliterary subjects and methods. Even more important, it can insist—while asserting the differences between critical method and historical method—that these differences rest not on pedagogical claims but on cognitive claims. It is not enough to urge, as some do, that to turn from philological studies to critical studies is to turn from an interest in making discrete "contributions to knowledge" to an interest in teaching the proper object of literary study, the work itself. For this is to limit the critic's function to pedagogy alone. The critical theorist can remind us that, unless we wish to surrender to the positivist's narrow definition of knowledge, literature and criticism can give us what might be called knowledge, even if it is not of the would-be scientific sort that the philologist used to aim at. Indeed, there may finally even be a bridge between criticism and history constituted by the former as it reveals the special historical role that literature and its meanings *sui generis* can play. Criticism may finally move beyond criticism by allowing to the work a peculiarly literary influence on the march of cultural forces and ideologies.[3] It may view the poet as exerting cognitive influences on his society that are unique and that need probing tools unique to them if we are to see fully how they function as well as how they come to mean. By so doing it may restore broadly cognitive claims to literary study, joining a function that is humanistically philosophical to the pedagogical function that many commentators have recently granted to the academic adoption of critical methods.

This essay would seem to claim a fearfully imperialistic ambition for criticism, giving it an autonomous realm and also authorizing it to mold all other realms to its own objectives. Yet its ambition should be nothing less than this. We must say of the teaching and study of literature what Matthew Arnold said of poetry itself, for the iron time strained him to justify his mistress as, in its exaggerated form, it strains us to justify ours: ". . . if we conceive thus highly of the destinies of poetry, we must also set our standard for poetry high, since poetry, to be capable of fulfilling such high destinies, must be poetry of a high order of excellence. We must accustom ourselves to a high standard and to a strict judgment." And so it is with our claims for our profession. If, as teachers of English literature, we defend our humanistic group of disciplines by settling only for the highest standards, by discovering for it and cultivating its unique subject matter, methods, values, and the kinds of cognitive awareness all these yield, then we shall have to give appropriate status to that area that can establish and maintain the hegemony of the domain to whose high destinies this entire book is to testify and whose high standards it is to urge.

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[3] I discuss this movement in criticism in some detail in my essay, "After the New Criticism," *Massachusetts Review*, IV (1962), 183–205. On this occasion there is space to do little more than mention this function as a desirable one for criticism to perform.

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WAYNE C. BOOTH

The Undergraduate Program

As I begin to write on the much vexed subject of the English major, I am haunted by the memory of two "episodes from real life." The first takes place at a good small college. The curriculum committee of the college has surveyed all of the major programs, as listed in the catalogue, and has found that most of them are unintelligible. In English, for example, there is a curious division of course electives into "A" and "B" groups, a division that no one in the department claims to understand. After long study, the committee recommends to the faculty that each department reconsider its announced program for majors and either improve the program or improve the explanation. The faculty meets; the proposal is considered. A full professor in the English department rises.

"I am reminded of what Johnson says about debating whether a boy should pull on his left or his right trousers leg first. The debate goes on, Johnson says, and meanwhile the boy remains unbreeched. Now we are known, and quite properly, as the best college of our kind in America. Why should we tamper with such excellence?" The proposal is killed.

Episode Two occurs at a state convention of English teachers. A young professor from "the best college of its kind in America" has just presented a report on an obviously successful program of comprehensive examinations. A response from the floor:

"Well, you know, that kind of program may work very well with your highly selected students. But we couldn't possibly put that kind of responsibility on *our* students. We live from hand to mouth, from comma splice to dangling modifier, and all this fancy stuff we just have to ignore."

I have no idea how widely influential such arguments have been in the shaping of major programs. But anyone reading through large numbers of catalogues and departmental statements will conclude, I think, that expediency and tradition have far too often been decisive. It is true that one finds some genuine programs which by their very design tell the student what specialization in English is about, suggest to him the necessary steps toward mastery of his field, and to some degree lead him from stage to stage on his journey. But in far greater numbers one finds what can only be called nonprograms, the many amorphous assemblages of course numbers, required in such-and-such quantities, taken in any conceivable order, with no reasons given.[1]

"A program of study may be elected in literature, or in composition, or in English and history, or in American literature and civilization, or in the teaching of English. The student and his adviser will arrange the program that appears best adapted to the student's individual needs and interests." "The department does not prescribe particular courses for a major program." "Majors will take twelve courses approved by the department. At least four of these must be from Group A [why?], four from Group B [why?] and four may be elected from the remaining courses [according to what principles of selection other than the student's badly informed personal preference?]." "Students concentrating in English are required to take Shakespeare and American Literature, and eight additional courses from the following list [of thirty-eight courses]."

Why? Why? Students "will take," and students obediently do take what is required and elect what their hearts desire, with individual programs "adapted," as often as not, to their level of ambition and the exigencies of their activities program or part-time work load. But let no eager visitor make the mistake, as I have done, of asking senior majors to explain the reasons for their "tailored" programs. Awkward silence. Long pause. "How many of your courses had prerequisites?" "None." "In how many of your courses as a senior were there sophomores who, in your view, held the class back?" "In all of them." "Were the classes you took as a senior different in any fundamental way from your sophomore English courses?" "No."

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[1] My conclusions are based on a reading of nearly one hundred catalogues and as many additional departmental statements as I could obtain. The sampling is obviously unscientific, but it includes the fifty colleges highest on the list in the annual Woodrow Wilson competition. It is likely to present a much more favorable picture than the national average.

Similar lack of definition can be found to some extent in other fields. But English is an especially amorphous subject, requiring repeated efforts at definition of the kind begun in the Preface to "The Basic Issues in the Teaching of English."[2] It is, in fact, many subjects, and it threatens to become many more subjects from decade to decade. Few departments can now provide adequate major programs in more than a fraction of the many fields that are now covered at one institution or another by "English" departments: English literature, American literature, European literature, classical literature, linguistics, creative writing, speech, journalism, drama, aesthetics, and the history, principles, and practice of rhetoric and literary criticism. And this is to say nothing of the many interdisciplinary subjects that are developed on all sides, sometimes with unfortunate, more often with beneficial results: literature and psychology, literature and society, the sociology of literature, literature and theology, history of culture, and so on. Even in departments which can afford to cover most or all of the areas judged to be legitimate, the individual student is still faced with the problem of what English is to mean to him.

The time may come when we will work as a profession to define our discipline, and one might hope that the "profession" will come to include all who teach language and literature, not simply members of English departments. But for now, "English" can only be what the individual departments say it is. And the painful truth is that most of us "say," by our failure to provide adequately planned programs, that English is a loose collection of any of a dozen or so subjects, available for sampling in any conceivable order, to the end of accumulating a pile of credits of a given size.[3]

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[2] Supplement to *College English*, October, 1959. Copies available from the four sponsoring societies: American Studies Association, College English Association, Modern Language Association, and National Council of Teachers of English.

No one who has lived for long with the reasons for this chaos can have unlimited confidence in any program of reform. There is no necessary connection—sooner or later we all learn to construct rueful aphorisms on the topic—between the shaping of catalogues and the shaping of minds. Even when catalogue reform stands for real reform, the results are often unpredictable: the most promising programs are undermined by forces nobody quite understands; a good teacher works his inexplicable transformations without the support of a good program—sometimes even in the teeth of a bad one. No wonder, then, that many of the best teachers have given up on departmental planning. "In the last analysis, it all depends on the teacher."

But those of us who have taught in good programs and in bad know another part of the truth. Though the best teacher can overcome a bad program, and the worst teacher can subvert the best plan ever made, you and I—average teachers all—soon discover that our best teaching can be hampered by a bad program, and our worst teaching mitigated by a good one. Unprovable or not, it is some such conviction that underlies the following unashamed plea for reform.

The unfortunate temptation, in the many efforts at defining "English," has been to substitute one's own favorite subject matter for whatever has passed for English in the prerevolutionary past. English literature is overthrown in the name of American literature, literature from *Beowulf* to Johnson is replaced by literature from Henry James to Robbe-Grillet, traditional grammar is replaced by structural linguistics, and so on. What we do not see very often are public confessions that the effort to cover more than a fraction of the "indispensable" subject matters has long since been privately recognized by most of us as absurd.

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[3] There have been innumerable discussions of the problem of what should constitute the "English major," six of which seem worth mentioning both as interesting in themselves and as representing different approaches to the problem: George Grandon Saul, "Suggestions toward a Revised Program in College English," *College English*, VIII (1945), 40–43; Herbert Weisinger, "The Problem of the English Major," *ibid.*, XI (1946), 342–347; Harlan W. Hamilton, "Current Trends in the English Major," *ibid.*, XV (1954), 339–346; Thomas Clark Pollock, "Should the English Major Be a Cafeteria?" *ibid.*, pp. 327–331; William Randel, "English as a Discipline," *ibid.*, XIX (1957), 359; H. A. Gleason, "What Is English?" *College Composition and Communication*, XIII (October, 1962), 1–13. There is a bibliography on the College Teaching of English in *College English*, XIX (1957), 17–26, with annual supplements thereafter.

It is absurd not only because most departments cannot hope to include instruction in all "English" subjects, or because no student can cover more than a fragment of what even the smaller departments claim to offer. It is absurd because coverage of subject matter is not in the least what we have in mind when we think of competence or distinction in our field. No one believes that what makes the difference between a man who is educated in English and one who is not is whether he knows one period rather than another. The very amorphousness of our catalogue requirements testifies to our conviction that the fundamental choice is not between particular authors, periods, or even disciplines. We can all name splendid teachers who know little or nothing about this or that period, and we can name brilliant scholars and critics who have never read Spenser or Spencer, Elyot or Eliot. We know, in fact, that the so-called gaps do not matter very much, so long as the student has developed the skills and attitudes that will enable him to fill the gaps when the need arises. The best professor of eighteenth century literature I have known never took a course, at any level, in eighteenth century literature.

There are two standard responses to the hopelessness of attempts at coverage. The first is to give up—that is, to find some euphemistic way to tell the student, in the catalogue, that the task of making sense out of his program is left entirely to him: "The major will elect eight out of the following thirty-eight courses." The second is to start over and think about the skills that are really needed by the student of literature and language and then to design programs that will lead every student, regardless of his special field, to develop these skills. There are by now a fair number of programs that are based, at least in large part, on this second way, programs that in effect invite the student to think about what he will do with literature and language once he has escaped the requirements.

We are probably not ready for any national statement of the skills that departmental programs ought to develop.[4] But there is a surprising consensus among those departments that have thought in these terms, especially if one interprets their implicit standards along with their explicit statements. Such a consensus might run something like this:

> To receive a degree from this department a student must show
>
> 1. that he can read, without guidance from an instructor, the following kinds of literature:
>   a. *"Imaginative" literature: fiction, drama, and poetry.* Though the questions on the comprehensive examination testing this ability will be primarily critical rather than historical, students will be expected to deal with works from at least two historical periods before ______. (The department should be realistic about this requirement. To read a work on his own, the student must have had experience with other works written in the same period; he must have at least a smattering of historical knowledge about the period; and he must know how to use secondary sources efficiently. The earlier the date set, the better—provided the department is convinced that there is some hope of making the requirement stick.)
>   *Recommended courses:*
>   *Recommended readings:*
>   b. *"Speculative" works: philosophy, literary criticism, history, linguistics, etc.* The student will be tested on his ability to read works that lay claim to validity or truth.

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[4] But see the list of standards for teachers of English, in *The National Interest and the Teaching of English* (Champaign, 1961), pp. 40–43. Though it seems to me far too ambitious—how, for example, could one ever discover whether a prospective teacher has the ability to lead his students "to a perception of human problems and an appreciation of human values"—the fact of its publication suggests that we may be readier to think in these terms than a reading of published major programs would suggest.

Though he cannot be expected to cover very much of the available knowledge about subjects other than literature and language, he will be expected to show that he can read difficult speculative works without depending on an instructor to piece out for him what is being said.

Recommended courses:

Recommended readings:

c. *"Rhetorical" works: orations, political rhetoric, propaganda, etc.* Every educated man, whatever his special field, should be able to assess the force of appeals made to his beliefs and allegiances; if he cannot, he is at the mercy of the rhetorician, whether salesman or demagogue. But the student majoring in English should go beyond elementary self-protection to the level of informed rhetorical analysis, whether of the sustained, imposing appeals found in great speeches or of the more common, often disguised, appeals in modern advertising and newspaper copy.

Recommended courses:

Recommended readings:

The student's ability to read independently in each of these three areas will be tested, first, by an intensive examination in his senior year (the works to be covered by the examination will be announced a few weeks in advance of the examination); second, by the quality of his reading as reflected in his senior thesis; and third, by the quality of his reading as shown by his term papers and class contributions throughout his time as a major.

2. that he can write effectively. This skill will be tested by the comprehensive examination, the senior thesis, and term papers throughout the major program.

   Recommended courses:

   Recommended readings:

3. that he can use a library efficiently and honestly to answer questions of fact and to discover what has been said about a given problem. The ability will be tested by the senior thesis adviser, as he observes the student's library work throughout the senior year.
4. that he can deal critically with historical generalizations about literary periods. Since he cannot realistically be expected to

know very much about very many periods, this ability will be tested, in the senior comprehensive, in relation to two (three?) periods only. The student may choose his periods, and they may or may not be the periods in which he has had course work.

Recommended courses:

Recommended readings:

5. that he can handle a variety of critical questions with some degree of maturity. Though he cannot be expected to master critical approaches that give difficulty even to his professors, he can be expected to know the major issues involved in the following: [a list of critical problems on which the department chooses to concentrate].

Recommended courses:[5]

Recommended readings:

There is nothing final about this list of possible requirements. Though the first two ought to be taken for granted for graduates of all departments, the other three are clearly slanted towards literature. The whole list thus leaves out certain skills which many departments will feel are indispensable, such as mastery of a foreign language or ability to make use of the principles of structural linguistics. For students with a special interest in language, alternative skills should be added, or perhaps substituted for the last two. Obviously the list as it stands does not do justice to the special needs of programs in teacher education, journalism, speech, or drama, though I should think a major in any of these fields would be cheated if he did not master the five skills I have listed. In any case, my point is not to argue for my list, but to suggest the importance of orienting all of our program reforms toward something more than the usual jockeying among subject matter specialties. Regardless of our legitimate special interest in special subjects, none of our specialties is of any use to the student who, because he cannot read and write and think for himself, cannot continue his own education.

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[5] If the department takes this requirement seriously, it will probably provide a course dealing with it explicitly, just as Iowa has recently done. The course at Yale might be taken as proof of seriousness of intention in this regard: "During the first term this course will study the variety of possible approaches to a literary work. A number of literary works (of various kinds and from several periods) will be examined closely, different groups of students trying different means of approach, formal structure, social context, literary tradition, intellectual setting, etc. In each case, the findings will be pooled, the results evaluated, and the value of each approach *in that case* considered. The object of the course is to make the student aware of the kinds of insight one may hope to obtain through different approaches and, even more, of the interdependence of these kinds of insight in a full interpretation of the work. The course will look toward the major essay, but only through suggesting resources rather than prescribing methods. The class will be devoted to discussion; frequent oral reports and occasional papers will be required."

Once we shift our goals from coverage to competence, we can begin to make our way with greater assurance among the various programs and devices that a department might or might not develop.

THE SENIOR COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

Though comprehensives can be abused and can go to seed if they are not constantly revised, the lack of a comprehensive is one of the surest signs of an ill-designed program. Even the weakest senior examination that forces the student to think across course lines, or at the very least to gather together what he has learned for one supreme effort, is better than the anticlimax experienced by the student who simply completes the right number of courses.

Unfortunately, the simple decision to develop a comprehensive does not get us very far; there is a wild variety of examinations now in use, some of them not in the least "comprehensive" and many of them only slightly better than no test at all. Some departments seem eager to imitate graduate programs, requiring the kind of factual coverage which makes little educational sense even when required for the PhD "prelims": "Paper A (one of two long examinations) will include general questions requiring a knowledge of English literature of the sixteenth, seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth centuries, and specific questions on one of the centuries (chosen by the student)." The very determination to tick them off, one by one, instead of saying simply "from 1500 to 1900" emphasizes a dogged insistence on coverage here that is sure to produce desperate superficiality.

Far more inviting are the examinations built on a syllabus of selected titles, with instructions to prepare for specific types of questions that reveal departmental goals. The Kenyon College syllabus tells the student that he will be tested on (1) detailed textual knowledge of all the titles listed, (2) understanding of their place in literary history, and (3) ability to comment upon them critically. Other colleges, like Bryn Mawr, go considerably further in precise definition of the areas to be covered.[6] The clearest definition of all is shown by programs in which a list of books is set by the department, with the understanding that students can expect such-and-such types of questions, as revealed in copies of previous examinations. Like all clarity, such concentration of focus is purchased at a price; individual departments will always quite properly vary in their willingness to sacrifice flexibility for the sake of clear focus. But almost any comprehensive is better than nothing; at least it will save us from the scandal of determining the completion of the major by an adding machine.

Why, then, do so many departments fail to require this kind of proof that a senior can write intelligibly on his subject? One state university not long ago dropped the comprehensive on the ground that the "papers were so poor as to be meaningless." Here is a solution that could no doubt solve all of our problems: If students who have come through a four-year program cannot perform certain tasks basic to their area, stop asking them to perform those tasks! It is not known whether, in the debate leading to this strategic retreat, anyone suggested that the whole program leading up to the test be reexamined, in order to develop a kind of training which might produce papers "good enough to be judged meaningful." Did anyone rise to attack a four-year program in "English" that produces graduates who cannot write on their subject competently for four, six, nine, or twelve hours? It is always much simpler to eliminate the hurdle than to find out why so few can jump it.

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[6] The final examination is in three parts:

1. Literary criticism, literary genres, and problems of style, based upon the reading of certain critical works of fundamental importance. Each student is expected to draw illustrative material from the fields in which she has elected to work.
2. An examination in one of the following periods. The student must choose a period other than that which embraces her special field.
   a. The Middle Ages (to 1500)
   b. The Renaissance (1500–1660)
   c. Neo-Classicism and Romanticism (1660–1832)
   d. The Nineteenth and Twentieth Centuries (English or English and American)
3. An examination in one of the following fields of concentration: Old English; Middle English; The Drama to 1642; Elizabethan Literature, nondramatic; The Seventeenth Century; The Eighteenth Century; Romanticism; Victorian Literature; The Novel; The Drama from 1660 to the Present Time; English and American Literature, 1890–1939; American Literature.

With the consent of the Department an examination in an allied subject may be substituted for the examination in the special field.

It is true that less shameful objections can be made to the comprehensive examination. There is some danger, for example, that teachers will feel "compelled to teach toward the comprehensive, rather than teach their subjects." The Graduate Record Examination has sometimes been abused in this way. But unless the instructor sees his "subject" as merely a collection of facts, uninformed by concepts and skills that turn raw facts into a discipline, it is hard to see how a properly designed local comprehensive could violate his teaching. There is, of course, the danger that one faction of the department will impose its critical or historical preconceptions on the rest, but this danger can be averted by ensuring that every teacher has the right of veto in planning the examination. There is also the chance that students highly competent in certain periods will find themselves forced to write about literature they know less well, but again this need never occur if the comprehensive provides enough alternatives.

One good pattern, used with minor variations for some years in a midwestern university, will show how little danger there need be of infringing on the individual teacher's rights.

1. Choose one novel, play, or long poem that you consider a major literary achievement, and discuss (in one hour) your reasons for thinking it *artistically* significant.
2. Choose one novel, play, or long poem (from a different period and type) that you consider *historically* important. Discuss the ways in which it seems typical of its historical period, and the ways in which, because it differed from its contemporaries, it became important to later periods.
3. Choose one novelist, playwright, or poet other than Shakes-

peare, most or all of whose works you have read, and show how your reading of any one of his works is improved or modified by your knowledge of his life and other works.

4. Sketch the historical development in either drama, fiction, or poetry, throughout *one* literary period. The period you choose must be different from the one discussed in Question 2.
5. Choose one critic whom you have found useful in your own study of drama. Choose one play by Shakespeare that your critic has *not* written about, and write a sketch of the essay he might have written.

Such a pattern will no doubt in itself please few departments. Some will be troubled, as I am, by the omission of rhetoric and linguistics, and there is no check on the student's ability to deal with ideas, except in literary criticism (can our majors read *Time*, Norman Mailer, or Simone de Beauvoir without disaster?). Some will surely want to have a more precise check on the student's capacity to read particular works *on his own*; the examination as presented provides few safeguards against a heavy dependence on received opinions accumulated during four years. But the attempt at some sort of pattern is, it seems to me, admirable. A student who faces such a comprehensive, having seen copies of earlier forms of it, knows what skills the department expects him to cultivate, and he will be led, one can hope, to avoid the kind of frantic, piecemeal effort at coverage that too often marks the final weeks of preparation. What is more, there *is* a kind of built-in coverage of a more important kind: no student is likely to pass who does not know at least two literary periods fairly well, and he obviously cannot write effectively on such an examination without a good deal of factual knowledge. Most important is the level of facility expected of him in dealing with certain central concepts of his studies.

Such examinations can be adjusted to deal with any skill the department cares about. Some departments might dare to ask for a fairly advanced discussion of the assumptions underlying literary studies: "Describe some advantages and disadvantages of organizing literary study by periods rather than by types." Or: "Since time in the undergraduate program is always limited, do you think it would be better for a student to avoid minor works and spend all of his time mastering the great works of English and American literature? Give your reasons." Perhaps most departments will want to avoid this level, and some may feel that even the relatively basic concepts and operations required in the above sample are too demanding. But the general notion of requiring students to prove *some* level of competence beyond the ability to pass course examinations seems to me a minimum requirement for any department that claims to have a "program." If the performance of all students on a comprehensive is "so poor as to be meaningless," then either the comprehensive is a bad one or the program needs fundamental overhauling.

The same point can be made more affirmatively. What any department should expect of its program is that students should feel a sense of achievement in completing it. The Toronto department, for example, justifiably feels no sense of embarrassment in the following announcement about its sequence of comprehensives: "At the annual examinations in each year the students in first- and second-class honours are ranked. To win a 'first' is an achievement; to stand first in 'firsts' is a great achievement." One knows, from talking to Toronto graduates, that this is not idle faculty boasting. Only those departments that can use such language without a sense of hypocrisy can afford to resist developing or remodeling their comprehensive examinations.

THE SENIOR THESIS OR HONORS PAPER

There is even less national agreement about the advisability of a required senior thesis than about the comprehensive. Many departments allow the thesis only as a privilege for the very best students, or for the honors candidates, on the grounds, once again, that the results from average students are not to be endured. Others leave it to the student's choice. And by far the majority have no official provision whatever for anything other than term papers. "The thesis may make sense at the best colleges, but at ______ our students are not up to it." "With a fifteen-hour load, carried by all department members except the chairman, who teaches twelve hours, we just don't have time to supervise such work, even if we thought the students could do it well enough to justify the extra work."

But surely we must again ask who is to blame if most of the students receiving BA's in English are so badly prepared that their teachers dare not face what they will do when asked for a piece of sustained, independent inquiry. Though the excuse of overwork is obviously in itself painfully unanswerable, it is only an excuse and not a reason. Why do the overworked departments find it impossible to turn over some of the responsibility to the student? Why not cancel half of the required course work and use the saving in staff time to provide supervision for independent projects? Obviously because "the students could not do it well enough." And this answer forces us back to the more fundamental question of *why* they cannot, not only as freshmen and sophomores, but as juniors and seniors. If four years of college work, two of them primarily under the English department, do not produce students who are able to approach a literary or linguistic problem on their own and write a literate account of their conclusions, then surely the solution is not to dodge the embarrassing test of our failure but rather to consider the causes and remove them.

We need not conduct research to discover the causes; they jump out at us as soon as we ask, "What is there in the preparation of each English major at ______ that will train him to meet progressively more difficult problems of inquiry, so that he is ready to do a substantial independent project in his senior year?" The answer at too many places would have to be, "Nothing but the occasional term papers, with no *systematic progression* of difficulty." Many could add, "The Research paper done in Freshman English—but with no attempt to follow through later on." At too many places students can say what a graduate of a large university said to me: "I wrote two term papers in my four years. Even my examinations were mostly objective. When I was faced with the choice of whether to do a thesis, naturally I chose not to." Some more ambitious colleges, on the other hand, require too many term papers—better than no writing at all, but forced on the student in such numbers and at such speed as to make real achievement impossible. At Earlham we once discovered that we had energetically and foolishly required some students in the department to write four or even five term papers in a semester.

Contrast with these extremes the few institutions that require a graduated sequence of increasingly ambitious papers. During the first term of their junior year at Princeton, "Students concentrating in English . . . present two essays totalling approximately 7,000 words on a single author, and in the ensuing term a single essay of about 8,000 words on a subject covering the work of more than one author. The independent work of the senior year takes the form of a thesis, normally limited to 20,000 words." Properly supervised, with careful comment on what has gone wrong at each stage, such a program must produce better senior papers than a simple thesis requirement—especially if the principle of graduated difficulty could be stated in terms other than increased length.

It is unreasonable, however, to expect outstanding thesis work even with the best preparation, unless students are excused from some part of their regular course work. With proper planning, the staff time saved by such curtailment of course registrations can go some way toward providing the needed supervision for the independent work. But it will not go all the way, except in institutions whose students are unusually capable of independent work—and they are generally the institutions which provide the staff time anyway. The rest of us are left with the need to improvise and rearrange as best we can.

Our chief enemy in such improvisation is the deeply ingrained notion that students must sit in classes fifteen hours a week to earn fifteen hours of credit, a notion that in turn rests on the assumption that they will not and cannot do any learning on their own. There has been a great deal of experimentation in recent years showing that even average students can, in fact, learn very well on their own, if provided with carefully prepared reading lists and sample examinations. What is now needed is a variety of imaginative programs that will combine such independent learning with course arrangements that contribute to rather than compete with the effort to develop independence.[7]

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[7] On reading this passage, a graduate professor, originally trained in English, raised an objection that might be echoed by many a harassed teacher at Backwater State: "It is part of the great American experiment to attempt the higher education of a far greater proportion of the population than has ever been attempted before. I can't help wondering if there isn't

OUTSIDE EXAMINERS

Some departments provide for all seniors, or at least for honors groups, an outside examiner who prepares and grades the comprehensive examinations and sometimes travels to the campus to administer oral examinations.[8] The obvious advantage of this practice is that it forces the student to think of his subject as something which goes beyond the personal and perhaps idiosyncratic interests of his own professors. At the University of Rochester, which has one of the best honors programs in the country, the student takes, for each of his honors seminars in his junior year, a written examination prepared by outside examiners. At the end of his senior year he is examined orally by such examiners.

This measure may not be so generally applicable as the first three, partly because it is expensive. A few colleges and universities are so far from their nearest neighbors that transportation costs alone are serious. The essential advantage of the outside examiner, however, is not his being from another campus but his being from "outside" the group of the student's immediate instructors. Many institutions, particularly larger universities with what amount to unlimited resources of "strangers" from within the walls, can provide all of the advantages of outside examiners without ever importing anyone. On the other hand, small colleges can in effect broaden their offerings less expensively with outside examiners than with visiting lecturers —and with more assured effect on the students' horizons.

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a sizable proportion of undergraduates, especially in many of the poorer schools, who should never have taken on what they are attempting. They are the element that defeats the English departments, at all levels. You seem reluctant to admit their existence." Well, I must admit, when pushed, that such undergraduates do exist, perhaps even in great numbers. But I would hasten to argue that until we can prove that all of the students who *look* misplaced, as seniors, were given first-class instruction from the freshman year on, we cannot know how many of them have been lost who might have been saved.

[8] Edith Wray once found that only one department out of every twenty-six makes use of outside examiners. "A Modern Odyssey," *College English*, XVI (1955), 510.

HONORS PROGRAMS

The title "Honors Program" covers a great variety of educational experience; often enough it means little more than that the student with good grades is given "Honors." The genuine programs range from those that excuse students from all normal course work and substitute a sequence of small seminars (e.g., Swarthmore, Rochester) to those that simply add requirements to an already overloaded schedule. At Yale, honors students take only two year-long courses during each of the junior and senior years, the remainder of their program consisting of individual projects. At Washington University students may do honors work in all four years, with increasing demands from year to year. At their best, such programs provide a demonstration that "English" need not be amorphous, and that when it is not, students can move through four years with a sense of mounting seriousness of achievement; they leave their programs with a permanent respect for their subject.

SEQUENCE OF COURSES FOR ALL MAJORS

Nobody has ever seriously doubted that we learn best when the hurdles to be leapt are placed in some sort of reasonable order. It is true that theorists do not agree about what precise sequences are best; Whitehead and Bruner, for example, both challenge the popular notion that the progression should always be from the most simple to the most complex. But every educational theory, whether it emphasizes a subject matter that would be violated by unplanned accumulations of data, or "the child" and his needs, leads to the same point: all worthwhile educational planning includes provision of sequences.

Most American English departments do not provide sequences; as Hume once said, in the palmy days of faith in reason, I should not have to complete the syllogism, since it will be obvious to every reader. Most departments—even those that have developed honors programs that do provide a genuine sequence—still leave the ordinary major to indiscriminate credit collecting. Often enough, *all* majors find themselves with little or no guidance about which courses might appropriately fall in which order. The result is more harmful than most of us would like to admit; graduate students and sophomores are lumped together with juniors and seniors, under instructors who cannot assume knowledge about anything.

Quite aside from the unfairness to the sophomores and the graduate students, the effect on the senior is disastrous. Even if the teacher decides to play to the gallery rather than the pit, the gallery cannot be assumed in any such nonprogram to know any one fact, any one author, any one period. One group of majors may know Pope, Addison, Swift, and Fielding but nothing about Donne or Milton; many of them will know nothing about anything before 1800 except Shakespeare. Perhaps a third of them may know some English history, another third something of American history; the rest have filled their history requirement, in the absence of guidance from the department, with anything from Russian history to "The History of Colonialism in South Asia." More important than these factual differences, some will have had little experience with critical terminology, while others may be overloaded with contemporary critical jargon and ignorant of the linguistic and historical grounding necessary to any kind of advanced study. And so on. Regardless of the brilliance of the teacher's performance, he cannot hope to teach very much to very many in such a chaotic assemblage; wherever he chooses to direct his fire, he must miss most of the target.

It is, of course, a great boon to such students if they are working within a framework provided by one or more of the first four suggestions. At the very least, these clearly defined final hurdles will ensure that every student who gets a degree has worked hard enough to make him respect it. But we should not be satisfied until we have had every major achieve the measure of competence of which he is capable, and this we cannot do by offering him an indiscriminate selection of courses to be taken without thought of order or appropriateness or relationship to previous preparation.

The precise nature of the sequence that we develop will never be dictated to us by any natural relationship among our various subjects. Even in the physical sciences and mathematics there is now no one accepted order of learning, and our waters are obviously murkier than those. We can hope only to develop a variety of sequences that make sense in different settings.

At one small midwestern college, for example, where the number of majors in each class seldom exceeds twenty, the English faculty capitalized on this accidental advantage and organized a two-year sequence of courses, required of all majors. The reform coincided with a college-wide change that provided a three-course load per *quarter* for each student rather than the traditional five-course load per *semester,* which meant that one-third of the student's time could be spent in the sequence. The six units of this program now run as follows:

1. An introduction to the study of literature—a rigorously planned encounter with the basic concepts and skills needed by every specialist in English.
2-4. English literature from 1600–1830. (The sequence *could* cover any historical period, short or long, or it could deal with the major writers of all periods, or indeed with any reasonable pattern of types or authors or periods or problems.)
5. Literary criticism. (The senior comprehensive is taken *after* this unit and *before* the final unit—just after spring vacation of the senior year.)
6. The senior thesis—not a course but a blank space in the course program, allotting at least one-third time for completion of a thesis that has been planned as early as the end of the junior year and never later than the first term of the senior year. Some students arrange their programs to allow for two-thirds time in this final term.

These six units, with a two-term requirement in American literature and one term of Shakespeare, leave the student with three electives in his major field, making a total of about one-third of his undergraduate experience.

While such a program obviously does not solve all problems, it does manage, like current British and Canadian programs, to provide a series of increasingly difficult hurdles. Unlike the British series of examinations, it helps to lead the student through shorter stages to the final climactic moments. It also prevents an anticlimactic final senior term, by saving the most important achievement, the thesis, for the last humane moment—two weeks before graduation. Perhaps most important, it develops a good deal of *esprit de corps*; by the senior year, students have begun "to educate each other," the report runs, "to a degree that we would have thought impossible before the experiment was tried. Discussion groups improve steadily throughout the sequence, and we find that there is a good deal of spontaneous give and take in the improvement of theses as the deadline draws near."

Larger departments obviously cannot enjoy all of the advantages of this neat arrangement; even if the department can agree on appropriate sequences, the majors cannot all travel entirely together. But such departments need not be content with a total lack of group morale. I know of one large private university where the rigorous program of comprehensive examinations is partially vitiated because the English majors never meet together as a group, seldom meet the same faces in two consecutive terms, and may go for the entire two final years without ever taking part in a discussion section of any kind. The student is left to prepare for his major comprehensive without any sense that either the faculty or his fellow students care about his success or failure. As the university looks at its astonishingly high attrition figures during the junior and senior years, it might well ask whether students would leave in such numbers if they felt that they had something to look backward to with pride and something to look forward to with hope.

As I have said, some honors programs combat these difficulties effectively. But surely we can do more than we have done to extend these benefits to all majors. A first step would be to ensure that every student belongs to some sort of cadre resembling an honors group, stable throughout the last two years, so that in every term he has at least one course or seminar or "tutorial" which is small enough for discussion and which contains no students who are far ahead or far behind.

SEQUENCES OF EXAMINATIONS

To departments who feel that a rigorous sequence of required courses, covering as much as three quarters of the student's total major, is likely to lead to regimentation, the alternative of examination sequences may be more appealing. There are several such sequences already in use, the best features of which might be summarized in the following composite program:

End of sophomore year: Qualifying Examination No. 1, on a set list of books and terms covered in freshman and sophomore literature courses. Passing grade required for admission to major program.

End of junior year: Qualifying Examination No. 2, on an expanded reading list, including new types of literature and new degrees of difficulty. Passing grade required for admission to senior standing.

End of senior year: Comprehensive examination (three or four three-hour examinations) covering critical and historical skills, and knowledge of periods, authors, titles, and terms carefully specified in advance.

In any such program, the student should be given *at least* one-third of his time for preparation, from the junior year on. Ideally examinations ought to be geared to a sequence of courses (as on p. 214) or lectures that would help the student master the skills he needs if he is to prepare for a genuinely comprehensive examination. The program itself might very well lead, if taken seriously, to student demand for improved courses and sequences.

The most obvious objection to such examination sequences is that they will require increased staff time. Good comprehensive and qualifying examinations are difficult to prepare and grade. But if students have been genuinely motivated to work on their own, we can save staff time by refusing to offer courses in every conceivable area. One useful type of qualifying examination might in fact be set in a field in which the department decides deliberately not to offer any courses. "You may learn how to master a period by taking courses in Periods A, B, C, or D. But a major part of your examination will be in Period E." Ah, but the students will do so badly! Perhaps. But probably no worse than they do now, and if such experiences were doubled or tripled, with careful indications to the students about where they had gone astray, we would surely find ourselves producing a crop of graduates somewhat more inclined to independent reading and thinking than we now manage.

IMPROVEMENT OF THE FRESHMAN COURSE

The obvious objection may still be made that such programs require better students than most English departments are ever likely to have. "It's all very well for students at places like X, but what about us out here in poor old Y?" It is true, of course, because tautological, that the better the students, the better they will do in such programs. But I think it makes equally good sense to say that only the best students can survive a loose program unscathed. What is much more important, a well-planned program can itself attract better majors.

But it will never do so unless it is preceded by a first-rate freshman course. We all want the best students we can get, yet by and large we seem to do all that we can to drive them away. Instead of developing a challenging freshman course, taught by our best teachers, many of us guarantee the weakest possible freshman course by misusing teaching assistants. We give what is always our cheapest and often our worst instruction to freshmen and then find ourselves trapped, or so we think, into providing only the most routine programs for those mediocre students who have chosen English by default. If a choice must be made, it is probably better to improve the quality of instruction on the freshman level and let the program itself provide the quality on the senior level. Given good students, an average instructor in a senior seminar cannot do too much harm; if a comprehensive of the right kind is plainly looming, the right kind of student will learn his subject in spite of the worst instructor. But if we have driven most such students into the other disciplines, the best of upperclass teachers will find few rewards for his labors.

PUBLISHED STATEMENT OF PURPOSES

Any fully articulated program will itself "tell" the student what the department thinks English is or ought to be. But it should probably be supplemented by a more direct form of telling which is astonishingly rare: a simple, straightforward, printed statement of the department's purposes and methods. I find very few departmental efforts to explain the major program and even fewer that could possibly be understood by a student *before* completing the program. Most departments say nothing at all except for a paragraph in the catalogue, and even those that put out a mimeographed statement somehow make the explanations sound like instructions for initiation into a secret cult: "At least twenty of the required thirty-six hours are to be elected from advanced courses marked 'A,' and not more than eight from advanced courses marked 'B.' English 10 and X 10 are not counted toward the major." "In addition, *eight* quarter-hours from C05, C06, C07, C08, C09, C22-5, C29-5, C33-5, C37-5, C38-5, 40-5, 041-5, C51-5. Note: C98 and C99 may, with approval, be substituted for some of the above requirements." "With departmental approval the following may be used as related courses: Latin, Greek, French, . . . Anthropology . . . Geography . . ."—and so on for twenty-seven courses.

In contrast to this sort of thing, Antioch's nineteen-page booklet, "Field Syllabus for the Department of Literature," takes the student into a humane world. It includes a general statement of Aims and Expectations, with a brief defense of literary study; an explanation of the requirements; a description of the senior comprehensive examinations; a "Guide to Reading," with starred items that are strictly required of all majors; and a bibliography of reference works useful in the study of English. It is true that such a statement by itself might mean very little; even the most elaborate apologia will be ignored by students if not supported by systematic programing. But a good program deserves a good statement. The bright freshman who has been challenged by his freshman course ought to be aided in his decision about whether to major in English by an attractive presentation of what the choice will mean.

So much for the basic "English major." What special programs, if any, ought the department to develop?

SECONDARY TEACHERS

The trend in recent years has been toward increasing responsibility of English departments for training teachers of English. It is true that some colleges still refuse to "taint" their liberal arts program with teacher training, and there are still too many institutions at which all of the teacher training is done by departments of education. But the overwhelming majority of English departments are now thoroughly committed to assuming a responsible role in the improvement of English instruction at all levels. In late 1962, eighty English department chairmen from major colleges and universities met at the University of Illinois and—in a move that would have been unbelievable even ten years ago—urged themselves to develop "sustained programs of teacher education," and accepted the preparation of teachers of English as "among the important responsibilities of college and university departments of English."[9]

It can be said, then, that there is no longer any question about whether the departmental offerings will be cluttered up, as one recalcitrant chairman put it, with courses in teacher training. The question is whether the inevitable involvement of English departments in teacher training will be effective. What we like to think of as our superior training in literature and composition will not ensure that our efforts to train teachers will be better than the courses taught by education departments.[10] It seems likely that only if the best minds in education and in English pool what they know about effective teaching will the training of teachers improve.

Fortunately there has been a good deal of such cooperation in the past few years, perhaps most dramatically in the development of Master of Arts in Teaching programs. Since such programs inevitably go beyond the limits of my subject, I can only touch upon some of the principles that seem to be applicable to the traditional four-year "education" programs. (I use the word traditional with some sense of irony, knowing as I write of at least one state that will only this year abandon the two-year "normal" diploma for teachers and require a full AB degree!)[11]

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[9] "Resolutions Adopted at a Seminar of English Department Chairmen, Held at Allerton Park, December 2–4, 1962," Resolution No. 1. Published widely, *e.g.*, *PMLA*, March, 1963, sheet facing p. 1.

[10] For a lively statement from a professor of education of our failure to provide a major program relevant to the programs of high school teachers today, see George H. Henry, "English, the Life of English, and Life," *English Journal*, III (February, 1963), 81–85. Though many of us may be initially repelled by Professor Henry's plea that we develop a "sociology of English," the uninviting phrase should not conceal from us the need to train teachers whose commitment to literature and desire to teach it are combined with knowledge of the special problems faced by the English teacher in most American high schools.

The first principle is that training in methods always proves more effective when tied to a definite subject matter than when abstracted to the level of "methods in general." Students who are required to spend much time on abstractions about good method invariably feel a sense of irrelevance. Students of English who can observe master teachers demonstrating how to teach a particular poem, and then discuss with that teacher the general methods that underlie his particular practice, invariably find the experience rewarding.

From this follows the second principle: if demonstrations in how to teach a poem, play, or novel, are to be effective as teacher training, they must come from teachers who are thoroughly trained in literature. Nothing has been more harmful to the standing of education departments than the occasional spectacle of a master methodologist teaching what to the student is an obviously uninformed interpretation. The teacher of teachers, whether drawn from English or education departments, must be at least as challenging, strictly on the literary level, as the best teachers of literature in the department.

The third principle is that practice teaching is done best when it is closely related to a growing intellectual curiosity in the practice teacher, curiosity not just about the process of education but about the subject matter he teaches.

These three principles suggest that good teacher training is not likely to be done without the cooperation of the best minds in any English department. They also suggest that there must be as much careful design of the teachers' program as of the regular major; difficult as it may be to accomplish, a department must struggle constantly against the temptation to develop a watered-down program for teachers. Though students who take their license as undergraduates obviously cannot hope to cover as many English courses as regular majors, they can be expected to carry out a program which is fully as rigorous in its own terms.[12] It can be so, however, only if it is as carefully planned as the standard program. How many English departments are there—I know of none—that have devised a meaningful comprehensive examination for prospective teachers of English, a comprehensive which would at least show as much thought about the desired knowledge and skills as the sample comprehensive for regular majors described above? Is there any reason other than inertia that would allow us to say, as at Earlham College we once allowed our program to say, that "secondary education majors" will be *excused* from such-and-such requirements—and let it go at that? The department should itself ensure that the program, worked out in cooperation with the education department, defines by its structure, both of major examinations and of culminating papers, what the purpose of the program is.

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[11] See *The National Interest and the Teaching of English*, pp. 43-48, for statistics showing the wide range of certification requirements throughout the United States.

There is no theoretical reason why comprehensive questions and thesis topics for prospective teachers cannot be devised that are fully as demanding, though covering a somewhat modified pattern of skills, as those for regular majors. (Sample questions: "It is sometimes argued that twentieth century literature is unsuitable for high school students, since it is morally degrading and intellectually too demanding. Choose three major works of the century, one novel, one play, and one poem, and discuss (1) their usefulness as works to be taught in high school where you did your practice teaching, and (2) how you would go about teaching them if they appeared on your reading list next year." "Summarize one modern book about language or about English grammar and show how you would [or why you would not] make use of the book in your teaching.")

If it is obvious that such questions cannot be set or read by persons not highly trained in literature and language, it should be equally obvious that such training is not enough. Since experience in secondary education will be as important as competence in language and literature, supervising teachers may well be found in the education department or in the local high school.

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[12] "The *median* state credentials requirement in English for an elementary teaching certificate is only six semester hours. . . . Nineteen states specify no college work in English." *Ibid.*, p. 45.

But the important thing for "us" to remember is that we cannot simply transform the educational universe by getting our fingers back into the pie; we must educate ourselves about educational problems, and we must be willing to devote as much energy to thinking about our programing in this area as in any other. If we cannot do this, then we may as well reconcile ourselves to a continuing deterioration in the quality of training received by English teachers. More and more of them will have little real experience of English taught at an advanced level. More and more of them will fear their subject and in consequence impart attitudes of hostility to English under the guise of teaching it.

All of this presupposes that some way must be found to require the AB or MA for all secondary teachers of English, with the education courses strictly coordinated with, rather than dominating, the subject matter. How this ideal is to be brought about is no easy question, though the MAT programs again provide valuable clues. In any case it is quite clear that the old forms of active hostility and mistrust of the educational enterprise are long outmoded; as the secretary of the MLA has recently warned us, if we cannot work together to ensure replacements of our ranks, generation by generation, then we may very well go "the way of the classics."

ELEMENTARY EDUCATION AND THE "ENGLISH MINOR"

The problem of the prospective elementary teacher is more complex and not only because the "education" requirements he must meet are so great that in most states he cannot possibly major in English. There is space here only to mention a few of the most important points relevant to our planning.

The old notion that the elementary teacher of language arts need know very little about anything besides children's literature and reading techniques is under ever stronger attack. There seems every reason to believe that the early years are far more important in forming permanent attitudes toward language and literature than the high school or college years. If Bruner is right in saying that even the most complex skills can and should be taught in elementary form in the elementary years, and that when such skills are ignored over several years the capacity to develop them later on is likely to atrophy, then we need teachers in the early years who are themselves thoroughly involved with literature and language. What the training should be, and what role the English department should play in that training, is a matter of lively national debate at this moment. But what does not seem questionable is that elementary teachers must have, whatever else is necessary, a fundamental commitment to our enterprise. They must love books, they must love literature, they must believe in the importance of language study.

Whether a departmental minor required of elementary education majors will contribute toward these highminded and vague goals depends, obviously, on how such a minor is developed and administered. Students who "go into" education by default and then are forced to take uninspiring English courses of dubious relevance to either their own lives or their professional goals are likely to retain and relay attitudes of indifference, producing worse results than if they never received an English credit. On the other hand, there would be little gained if we simply improvised courses tainted with a bit of estimable relevance to elementary instruction. Ideally the elementary teacher should be someone whose own devotion to adult literature is so strong that it will thrive rather than wither under the pressures of dealing with children year by year; the elementary teacher who knows how to encounter adult literature in an adult way is in fact likely to enjoy teaching good children's literature, and he is sure to discover the connections between his adult interests and his pupils' needs—if he really has those interests.

Thus the department, while it may give some explicit help by providing a good course in children's literature, can do more by the very way in which elementary majors are treated in the general curriculum. Simply to establish a minor, with an honorific title, can perhaps do something to convince the student that elementary teaching is respected by the department. More important, of course, would be to ensure that every English course taken in a very tight program yields a deepening commitment. Perhaps it is at this point that we do the greatest disservice when we treat freshman composition as a stepchild. Since the elementary majors can at best take very few English courses, it is an unforgivable waste to subject them to badly planned, routine courses, taught from tasteless handbooks and anthologies by inexperienced and distraught graduate students.

One solution in larger departments might be to provide special sections of freshman English for prospective teachers, elementary and secondary, taught by the best teachers in the department, paid well for doing the department's most important job. Though this would be a good solution, one draws away from it because it leaves untouched the major scandal of the freshman course entire. In any case, we can hardly claim to take seriously all of our own talk about improving the teaching of English so long as we do nothing to ensure that every prospective teacher experiences, in his required English courses, the best teaching that we can offer.

SPECIAL PROGRAMS FOR OTHER PROFESSIONS

Some departments have developed various programs to suit the special needs of certain other groups, such as law, journalism, medicine, and engineering. Though I have nothing to support my opinion but a few scattered quotations from correspondents who happened to mention this matter, it seems fairly evident that such programs are only rarely advisable. Even when the special skills are easily defined, there is usually little need for significant departures from a properly planned English major. The law professors, for example, are constantly claiming that English departments do not teach their majors how to dig out the meaning of difficult prose. I daresay they are right, but the solution is hardly to develop a special prelaw program that will take care of this skill for lawyers. Any English major who is graduated without this skill, regardless of his vocational direction, should be entitled to sue his alma mater, wording his suit in prose both difficult and biting. The solution is, in short, to take this part of the departmental duty seriously. We should quite simply refuse to give the degree to *any* student who cannot read difficult prose works on his own.

Similarly, the journalism student needs no elaborate modification of his program. In so far as he needs to learn to write clear, straightforward, lively English, his major program, including the senior thesis, will take care of this skill *if it is in fact treated seriously*. The special journalistic skills can be introduced in an elective or two, and then—if the student has learned how to read, think, and write—picked up economically on the job. Though most journalism departments would no doubt repudiate this assertion, newspaper editors do not. "Teach them to read and write and to be able to look at the world with their own eyes and we'll teach them how to write leads and features." In short, though the department may afford, if it is large enough, to provide a variety of "special programs" catering to various professional goals, such programs should never be allowed to interfere with the achievement of the skills proper to a major.

RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHER DEPARTMENTS

Simply to list the various patterns among different departments dealing with literature would take more space than is devoted to this entire chapter. Many colleges, especially the older colleges in the East, have no separate drama, speech, or journalism departments. Most universities, especially the newer ones, have highly developed departments in these areas and may have added programs or departments of linguistics, comparative literature, and so on. Clearly no one pattern of formal relationship among the many disciplines that touch on literature can be recommended, but it is equally clear that too much of our development in all of these areas, like our proliferation of courses in English, has taken place without much thought about what the student needs to be able to *do* if we are to feel comfortable about granting him the AB. Quite legitimate graduate programs in drama are allowed to dictate the development of undergraduate majors with only a smattering of nondramatic literature. What is equally bad, departments of English then produce graduates who have had little experience with live drama because "the drama department takes care of that." Speech majors graduate without knowing the "Areopagitica" or Burke's speeches, and

English majors graduate without ever having given or analyzed a speech. Linguists read little literature, and literature majors are graduated with notions about the origins of grammatical systems that would have shocked medieval and nineteenth century grammarians, let alone the structural linguist. On a really large campus, only an active and aggressive dean of humanities can hope to combat the worst products of our increasing specialization, and even he will be helpless unless we are determined to relate everything we do back to first principles about what we want our graduates to be able to *do*. If we once trick ourselves into thinking only about what we want them to *know*, we are lost.

I must close as I began, admitting that institutional reforms will never achieve as much as we would like. Most of the desirable effects I have described *can* be produced by a good teacher, working privately behind the facade of a nonprogram. By his very presence he will produce sequences and climaxes without needing to talk about them. An interview with such a teacher can be a comprehensive examination more demanding and more memorable than a departmental oral; an ordinary "term paper" written to satisfy his high standards can be much more important than many of the shoddy imitations of scholarship that are called "senior theses."

Even so, I wonder whether such noble private effects are not rarer than we would like to admit. And even if they are frequent, is there any reason to hope that we can rely on them in dealing with ever larger numbers of students? What seems sure is that sound departmental programs can give all of us far more opportunity than we now have to show what we can do.

In short, I doubt that there is any department in the country that could not improve the quality of its graduates by evaluating the academic program through which they pass and the environment in which they live outside of class. But only a pitifully small number report that they are planning any improvement beyond adding courses (often) or subtracting courses (rarely). My guess is that at least four departments out of five foresee no *essential* change in their programs over the next five years. The two little dramas with which I began repeat themselves endlessly. The "good" departments say explicitly, "Why should we change? We're already doing so well." The really poor departments often do not say much of anything, but what little one can get out of them indicates that they have often lost all hope; the students are so poor, the faculty so badly overloaded, the administration so indifferent, that nothing can be done. How to undermine these and other forms of inertia is not the subject of this or any other chapter in this book. But perhaps the first step is to know that many among us have, after all, transformed our circumstances simply by deciding that it was possible to do so.

I I

ROGER P. McCUTCHEON

Graduate Programs in English

At the risk of affirming the obvious, let us review the essentials required for high level graduate study in English. First of all, the university library must have the basic texts, the definitive editions, the primary sources, full files of the learned journals, and the essential bibliographical and reference tools. As a blunt and perhaps brutal measure, I suggest that a university which does not have at least 500,000 titles in its library should not be offering PhD level work in the humanities.

A second essential is a well-trained faculty active in research. To collect and retain such a faculty, a university must pay very well, provide all sorts of fringe benefits, and subsidize research by grants for travel and by assistance of all kinds, including support for publication. Graduate students have a right to be taught by those who are productive and whose seminar references are kept up-to-date. There should be supporting strength in history, modern languages, and philosophy. Hopefully, students and faculty will form a community of scholars who will create a graduate climate of opinion.

The third ingredient is a sufficient number of well-prepared and able graduate students, on generous fellowships. The ideal graduate student already writes well, has a good reading background and a fair range of cultural interests, plenty of energy, and an insatiable curiosity. He must be able to read with enjoyment in at least one modern foreign language and preferably in two. A knowledge of Latin, think many of us, is necessary for most advanced work in English. Hopefully, the graduate student will have already discovered that the eight-hour working day is for organized labor, not for the scholar. Professor Manly used to say that a scholar who worked only eight hours a day would never get excited enough about his problem to reach a brilliant solution.

An ideal library, an ideal faculty, and an ideal graduate student body constitute a Utopia. Such a Utopia is not always easy to discover, and it is always in danger. Our regional accreditation agencies have set 40 percent as the desirable proportion of PhD's for a college faculty. The national average is shockingly far below this, so fast have our colleges been growing. The opportunity is so inviting that too many ambitious yet poorly equipped institutions are about to offer cheap PhD degrees. Since there is not yet any effective accreditation for graduate programs, this threat is both real and grave. A state institution which only yesteryear dropped the word "Teachers" out of its legal title has just been solemnly approved by a state commission to grant PhD's in English. Its library has less than 200,000 volumes, there are no adequate journal files, and there is not a single scholar in its entire humanities staff. The threat is real; our standards *are* in grave danger.

This is thus a most opportune time to review our graduate programs in English. Some of the courses may have outlived their usefulness and should be replaced; they perhaps represented an area or a technique made great by a professor now departed. Or we may find that, thanks to democratic procedures and pressure politics, too many courses are offered in identical fields. Perhaps important new fields have been neglected; our cultural patterns do shift amazingly, and very few absolutes are left.

ADMISSION

An obvious place to begin is with admissions policy. An English department has the responsibility to the craft of admitting to graduate study only those most likely to profit from the graduate discipline. The admissions machinery may have passed (by default, perhaps) to deans and registrars and to that large lesser nobility, the clerical staff. But a department willing to exercise its responsibility can certainly recover sufficient authority to bar the obviously unqualified and perhaps even to select the students best fitted to the special strengths of its curriculum. In the selection process it should utilize for what they are worth—and this can be much—such tests as the Miller Analogies and the Graduate Record Examination.

One way in which a department can regain control of admissions is by demanding transcripts and letters of recommendation and scrutinizing these closely. A transcript will tell far more than a mere grade point average about a student's training and purpose; it may make a student with poor grades in his early work seem a better academic risk than one whose work has been merely adequate throughout; it will certainly show in what areas of literature he has prepared himself and what deficiencies have to be made up in graduate school. Also, the reputation and standards of the college of origin must be carefully weighed. A student with an A record from a weak college is by no means as good a risk as one with a B— record from a strong liberal arts college.

Letters of recommendation must be interpreted with caution, but—especially after one learns to read between the lines—they can give valuable information about particular strengths and weaknesses. Writing such letters honestly is a skill we must all acquire; reading them is also a skill. One large university offers help—not entirely facetiously—by providing a glossary for such letters. Here are some items:

Recommending Term	*Reality*
Sensitive, Penetrating	Frivolous
Thorough, Conscientious	Stupid
Clever, Imaginative	Charlatan
Impressive piece of scholarship	Unreadable
Great sensibility	Unbridled imagination

The warning is salutary and also reminds us that in reading a letter of recommendation we are judging the writer as well as the student.

An admissions committee must learn what kinds of undergraduate training will best lead into its plan of graduate courses, what deficiencies in preparation can be tolerated and remedied at the graduate level, and what abilities a student must have if he is to achieve a doctorate in a reasonable number of years. For most graduate programs, a student will need a sound college major in English. For other programs, a major in classics or history or philosophy will be adequate. Some students may redeem a major in journalism. But the committee should be cautious about letting in students who must spend most of their first graduate year taking undergraduate courses.

Admissions officers find particular difficulty in estimating transcripts from colleges which have set up very permissive programs for English majors. Many colleges permit students to become English majors with a mixture of speech and dramatics, journalism, creative writing, and contemporary literature. Such students may present thirty or more hours of pseudo-English and yet be likely to need a fifth year of college level work before attempting graduate study.

In any graduate school, the admissions policy ought to be as widely known as such an arcane matter admits. In particular, the kind of preparation an undergraduate should have—in his major, in minor areas, in foreign languages—should be made as public as can be.

THE FOREIGN LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT

A reading knowledge of two foreign languages is a usual requirement for admission to candidacy for the PhD. French and German are still the preferred languages, and some very good graduate schools require Latin or Greek also. Spanish, with a rich literature, has a minimum of important scholarly writing and yet is often the only foreign language presented by many students.

Do graduate students make any important use of foreign languages? This is still a controversial question. True, it is no longer necessary to study Old English and Old French in German editions, and the faculty may not often assign learned articles in French and German. Whether the actual use of foreign languages in a graduate English program can be determined from the catalogue descriptions of courses is quite dubious. A seminar problem may or may not require the use of foreign sources. The practical utilization of a foreign language in a research problem may be less significant than the ability to enjoy reading a book in a foreign language. This ability is a lifetime asset of much value to any teacher of the humanities.

It should be noted that the recent improvement in methods of teaching foreign languages, both in high school and college, is sending us better prepared students. These improvements are due largely to the impressive FL program of the Modern Language Association. There is also an encouraging trend in some secondary schools to make Latin more available, and at least a few high school counselors are recommending Latin, even though it is a "difficult" subject.

The value of Latin for the English PhD candidate should be clearly understood. Without some Latin, important areas of research will be barred. No responsible English department will admit a student to research in the medieval field unless he can use Latin. Latin is also essential for advanced study in the Renaissance and the seventeenth century. For some Renaissance topics, Italian will be essential also.

The requirements for college entrance have an important relation to foreign language competence. Fifty years ago, most colleges required at least two units of foreign language for admission. Subsequently, many colleges dropped all language requirements, not only for entrance but for the AB degree as well. More recently, however, a reaction has set in, and a two-unit entrance requirement is again in favor. Some of the better colleges are now requiring four units of foreign language for admission. The high correlation between the amount of language taken in secondary school and success in college has been demonstrated.

It must be admitted that all too many college students achieve only a bare and temporary proficiency in a foreign language. In recognition of this, one college requires its honor students in their junior and senior years to read and report in writing on one foreign language book each month. The honors program has been planned to provide for the extra time needed, and the requirement should ensure a real command of the language.

THE MASTER'S DEGREE AND THE MA-3

Probably no other problem of American higher education has become as complicated as that of the MA degree. What was for centuries an ancient and honorable university degree is now all things to all men. Fewer than 200 universities grant the PhD degree, but some 700 are giving master's degrees. As of 1960, there were listed more than 150 kinds of master's degrees, including such novelties as the master of television and the master of science in human relations.

The requirements for the master's degree vary widely. Some, but not all, require one or more foreign languages. The thesis requirement, where it exists, may be met by additional course work. Training in research, even of an elementary nature, may or may not be included. Some of our famous universities require only one year of graduate study, with no thesis and no special examinations. As Oliver C. Carmichael expresses it:

> The Master of Arts degree may mean a fifth year of poor undergraduate work, a consolation prize for one who has failed his PhD qualifying examination, a professional degree for the public school teacher, or a scholarly degree given by a university that lays stress upon the first graduate degree.[1]

An institution which now offers only the master's degree but is planning to add some doctoral programs is likely to emphasize scholarly and research training. A university with strong PhD offerings already well established is likely to give little attention to its master's degrees. An institution with a large number of students planning on careers in secondary school or junior college teaching will make some master's programs available, since the master's—any master's—degree gives the holder an automatic salary increase. All too often, a master's degree is awarded for what amounts to a fifth year of college work only and that of mediocre quality, providing no introduction to scholarship and research. But for all these ills no single English department can offer much of a remedy, except to maintain its academic self-respect as long as it can.

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[1] Oliver C. Carmichael, *Graduate Education* (New York, 1961), p. 163.

Dr. Carmichael, in the work already referred to, makes a strong plea for what he names the "MA-3" degree. In this plan, bright students—the top 15 to 20 percent of the college sophomores—will be chosen to start special honors work in the junior year, will continue this through the senior year, and will have satisfied all requirements for the MA by the end of their first year in graduate school. They will have command of two foreign languages and will have had some introduction to college teaching. Carmichael, like many other educational statesmen, thinks that the colleges have generally underestimated the abilities of the brightest students. If they are given more demanding work to do, they can and will do it.

The advantages of the MA-3 are considerable. The students selected will be well above the average; "social promotion" alone will not get them admitted. Their instructors will be carefully selected, will be competent to advise about preparation for graduate study, and will pay special attention to the foreign languages. The junior and senior years can be in a college which has no graduate program, and the students, by special arrangements, can transfer to a graduate school for their master's year. Some institutions have been experimenting with this new program since 1959. The program is now operating in more than thirty colleges and universities and has received foundation support. The professors are given needed relief, and the students have good scholarships.

The MA-3 is not meant to be a terminal degree, but its holders are likely to be better prepared for elementary college teaching than the usual MA's. The superior students get an early identification and competent advice and as a result are able to complete the PhD work in two years after the MA. The progress of the MA-3 plan will be worth watching; its chief features could be widely emulated, since they require no very formidable expense.

A NEW DEGREE?

At present, the number of PhD's the graduate schools are turning out is lagging far behind the demand. The college population has increased much more rapidly than the graduate school population. There is a serious shortage of PhD's in most fields. In many colleges, the ideal faculty proportion of 40 percent PhD's is a counsel of perfection only. To meet the need, several suggestions have been made, a favorite one being a new degree to be awarded at the end of two years of full-time graduate study, after the passing of the comprehensive examination. It is pointed out that many graduate students find little difficulty in passing graduate courses, but they bog down with the dissertation. Departments other than English, notably mathematics, have reported that many students are quite good up to the dissertation stage, but they lack the ability to work out an original problem.

Perhaps some special designation might be used for the faithful students who have passed two years of course work and their comprehensive examination but who lack the interest and ability required to complete a dissertation. Such students may have actually completed a rich and significant program of study. They should make effective teachers for freshmen and sophomores; they might even gain a well-deserved promotion. The dangers are that the department may lower the standards for the comprehensive examination and that the administration, too easily satisfied, may employ too many of these and so perpetuate mediocrity.

What shall we call this worthy but not brilliant graduate student who stops a year short of the PhD? There has been considerable discussion but no consensus. The ABD ("all but the dissertation") has been suggested, facetiously. The Doctor of Arts and the DPhil are more serious suggestions. If the pressures become heavier, perhaps some suitable designation will be found. But this will be and should be understood to mean something less than the PhD and may become no more popular than the EdD.

PROGRESS

No matter how careful the initial selection, the department must constantly observe and judge the progress of each graduate student. Grades here are a notoriously inadequate measure, and some schools do not use them for graduate courses. For an undergraduate, successful completion of course after course will lead almost inevitably to a degree; this can by no means be presumed in graduate work. An advisory system of some kind is necessary. This may be as simple as assigning each student arbitrarily to an adviser or as complex as a committee appointed to review each student's work periodically and make recommendations. It is important that getting advice not be left solely to the student's initiative.

Most institutions require some kind of qualifying examination, sometimes early, sometimes late, before formally admitting a student to candidacy for the PhD degree. The nature of these examinations varies widely, but there is a growing tendency to emphasize critical ability as well as learning. An essential part of the qualifying examination at Harvard is a "written test of the student's ability to explicate a text"; Iowa's requirement is almost identical. A three-week critical paper is an important part of the qualifying examination at the University of Washington. Only a few years ago, such tests would have seemed heretical.

Approval of candidacy is a most important action, since it means that in the judgment of the department the student is justified in the further investment of his time. Of equal importance, it means that the department is willing to make a further investment of its time in the student. There is much to be said for having a qualifying examination early. A department which permits a mediocre student to continue year after year may ultimately incur some obligation to award the degree.

How long a time should we allow for the PhD? As most graduate schools proclaim in their bulletins, a student must expect to spend a minimum of three years for his doctorate. In some scientific fields such as chemistry, which has generous funds for scholarship and research assistants, and which has fairly rigid undergraduate requirements, many or perhaps most graduate students complete the PhD program in three years. In the social studies, which are not yet too generously supported, the time required for the degree is likely to be five to six years. In the humanities, the notoriously poor stepchild, the time span for the PhD is often well over six years and in some places may reach ten years. There is a strong impetus in the better graduate schools to speed up the PhD and to set as a norm a span of four years.

There is serious talk of setting four years as the maximum time to be allowed. Harvard is a notable proponent of the four-year plan, and its English department "assumes that the total time required for proceeding to the PhD will be four years."

THE ARTICULATED ENGLISH PROGRAM AS A PATTERN

This program was first presented "as a hypothesis to test" in *PMLA*.[2] The controlling idea is that since English is the only subject now required throughout all levels of our educational system, from school through college, teachers at each level should be able to build on an agreed upon knowledge and skill.

By the time a student enters graduate school, he should already have a limited but working firsthand knowledge of English and American literature. By the end of his first year in the graduate school, he should also have an understanding of the depths of the reworkings of ideas, plots, images, forms, and rhythms. He needs more than an encyclopedic knowledge; he needs a cultured, disciplined taste, a competence in coverage and perception, plus an understanding of scholarly method. When he has demonstrated a satisfactory ability in these, he has reached the MA level.

The statement continues:

> The PhD must know more literature than the MA, having widely explored the fields of poetry, prose, and drama, and also must be master of five approaches to literature *by the time he begins* to work on a dissertation in some special field:
>
> 1. The scholarly dealing with a specialized problem of text—validity, attribution, dating, influence—involving judgment of previous scholarship.
> 2. The close analysis of a literary work, large or small, for interpretive purposes.
> 3. The interaction between works of literature and the history of ideas.
> 4. The discussion of some general critical problems—biographical, aesthetic, philosophical, rhetorical, or stylistic.
> 5. The comparative approach based upon knowledge of the second literature in its original language.

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[2] *PMLA*, LXXIV, 4, Part 2 (September, 1959), 13–16.

A glance at these five approaches may be discouraging. At best, it will take some years before the graduate schools can expect entering students to have as sound a foundation as that assumed in the Articulated English Program. It may take a few more years before the majority of graduate students in English will have mastered all five of these approaches when they start work on their dissertations. But the ideal is no mean one, and to admit that not all of our graduate students in English today have reached this ideal is not to suggest that the ideal is too high. Certainly we who teach graduate students would be very glad indeed to have all of them equally well-prepared. We may need to rework both our undergraduate and graduate courses to achieve this ideal.

The Articulated English Program insists that the graduate student must familiarize himself with five different approaches to a literary work. He may prefer one to another and may as a publishing scholar eventually limit himself to one, but his PhD will be meaningless (and his work as a publishing scholar will also suffer) unless he has some control of all. Much of this control will, in any good university, come readily from the variety of courses and variety of teachers to whom he will be exposed.

Attention to textual problems should obviously be included in an advanced course in Shakespeare. But in any course in literature there should be awareness of the difficulty of establishing any point, no matter how small, beyond any reasonable doubt. To doubt a printed page—all printed pages, even—is the mark of a scrupulous scholar and might become an objective of many courses. *MacFlecknoe*, Gray's *Elegy*, or *Billy Budd* can hardly be studied without reference to the problems of establishing a text. No study of the first reception of the *Lyrical Ballads* or the early poetry of Tennyson or Yeats can avoid showing how important it is to know what a work looked like at its first appearance.

It is easy to suggest ways in which courses can give training in the other four objectives. Indeed, thanks to the New Criticism, we can count on a student's having some training under point 2, more with smaller forms than with larger and perhaps with so much zeal for studying a work in isolation that he will have to be reminded of the larger goals of literary history. The history of ideas has so well proved itself that it is hard to think of a course in literary history, especially in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, that will not demonstrate some aspect of this discipline. Criticism, one might argue, should be practiced in every course in the curriculum, and probably a student's first awareness of critical concepts will come from their application to specific works of literature. That more formal representation of criticism is needed in the curriculum is argued in another chapter. It is primarily in comparative literature that an English department may not be able to fulfill the objectives of the articulated program without changes in its curriculum, and it may here have to enlist the assistance of other departments.

The Modern Language Association has recently (1963) published a brochure, *The Aims and Methods of Scholarship in Modern Languages and Literatures,* edited by James Thorpe. The four essays treat Linguistics, Textual Studies, Literary History, and Literary Criticism. The essays, by competent practitioners of these disciplines, supplement the Articulated English Program. They will be of help to any department which is revising its course offerings, although, as the preface states, "This collection of essays is about becoming and being a scholar. . . . it is primarily addressed to students." The preface properly emphasizes the unity of our scholarly endeavors. "The common purpose of literary scholarship . . . is to reach a greater understanding of literature." The timely appearance of this brochure has made it possible to treat some important matters very briefly in this chapter.

INTRODUCTION TO GRADUATE STUDY

There is always the possibility of achieving some of the aims of the articulated program by teaching them directly. Many schools have courses with titles ranging from "Bibliography and Methods" to "Introduction to the Study of Literature." Some of these courses become almost philosophical approaches to literature, studying the various methods of scholarship and the assumptions behind them; such courses might well use Wellek and Warren, *Theory of Literature,* as a guiding text. Most aim lower, and some (including Columbia's "Introduction to Literary Research") are even sectioned according to principal areas of study. Hopefully, all of these courses will send the students to Altick's *The Scholar-Adventurers.*

The most common course is an introduction to bibliography and the tools of research. Obviously the graduate student in English needs to know his way around the library. Until he does learn the short cuts, the elementary guides, he will waste much time and suffer many frustrations. Perhaps the richness of our bibliographical aids today is best appreciated by those who long had to work without them. For example, *Abstracts of English Studies* was initiated only in 1958. Reliance on our new bibliographical resources should not keep us from practicing the searching that was at one time necessary. Tedious though it was, the diligence required to turn through the relatively unindexed periodicals had from time to time its rewards. Like the rulers of old Ceylon, we made unanticipated discoveries. This serendipity is not likely to be achieved by researchers who rely solely upon the accretions of our present-day bibliography.

From the simple task of finding things in the library, an introductory course may proceed to such problems as establishment of texts, identification of standard editions, descriptive bibliography, use and shortcomings of standard reference works—all things that a student might eventually learn for himself in solving problems in his other courses but which can be learned more painlessly here.

The frequent occurrence of such courses on an elementary level would indicate that many departments have found them useful. Often (as at Illinois, Indiana, and North Carolina) they are required; sometimes (as at Virginia, Rice, and Iowa) they are optional. Formerly a student was expected to take such a course in his first semester of graduate study, but now the tendency is to place the course just beyond the MA level.

THE CURRICULUM

A review of the present curricula has yielded nothing too startling nor too discouraging. In addition to courses in the medieval and linguistic fields, graduate departments of English offering the PhD normally have a wide range. The classics of our literary heritage will be well covered. Chaucer, Shakespeare, Milton; Dryden, Swift, Pope; Johnson, Boswell; Wordsworth and Coleridge; Hawthorne and Melville; Emerson and Thoreau; these groupings follow a familiar pattern, to be sure. Courses in the historical study of literary forms—the drama to 1642, the novel from Defoe to Dickens, the English critical essay, the American short story, the popular ballad—are normally available and should be. They provide a valid and significant means of organizing and presenting much information about literary history, as well as copious sampling of reading material. Period courses—the "Romantic Movement," "American Literature 1800 to 1860"—perform a similar function.

It is not necessary to offer courses in all possible areas of our subject. A more scrupulous selection of the areas a department will offer for graduate study is badly needed everywhere. Students who have been well trained in the basic authors and fields can, on their own, work up courses on less important writers and periods, as the opportunity and need may occur. The opinion that graduate students must take courses in all fields they may be called upon to teach is pathetically absurd, is based on too great a reliance on the value of taking courses and too little reliance on the ability of students to work independently when or even before they become professors.

In choosing his graduate courses, the future professor and his adviser should remember that the college and graduate school years are the years in which to acquire the cultural equipment which will not again be so readily available. A wide reading background in modern poetry or modern drama can easily be attained anywhere, thanks to the prevalence of paperbacks and reading lists. But to learn Greek is easier with a good teacher. *Beowulf* is an important document best mastered under instruction; so are most books before 1800. Since our graduate student cannot possibly take all the courses in the catalogue, he should in his selection prefer the courses which are obviously best learned with the help of the professors. Also, he should avail himself of the opportunities to visit, for weeks at a time, classes of professors of particular interest to him.

Though there is general agreement that it is not necessary to offer courses on everything, courses do multiply. Much of this increase is justified. New disciplines in linguistics, criticism, and comparative literature require new courses. A course will be authorized because a professor is especially competent in the field, because the library holdings are happily rich and mostly unexplored, and because the cultural importance of the subject amply justifies it.

But many courses now listed in graduate bulletins introduce the students to no really great names, perhaps to no really great book, and to no significant scholarly problems. Whitehead, following a suggestion from Sir Richard Livingston, thought that the only thing of value a student could possibly get from his college years was the awareness of excellence, the experience of greatness. In the crowded, precious years of graduate study, we in English are under a real obligation to emphasize the great, the excellent, even though we have loved and studied—all too long—some second best authors and books. *Sub specie aeternitatis,* what courses deserve to endure?

As the corpus of English literature expands, as more good books are published, the trend will inevitably be away from the medieval toward the contemporary. Fifty years ago graduate students in English were expected to know Old French and Gothic as well as Old and Middle English, with Old High German and Old Norse also strongly favored. Gothic is no longer taught in most places. The golden horn of Gallehus is one with the Franks' Casket. What graduate student today is asked to give the *Stammbaum* of the Alexander Romance or to unravel the Perceval story as found in the *Mabinogion,* Chretien de Troyes, and Wolfram von Eschenbach? By now we have almost abandoned literary history before *Tottel's Miscellany,* and as the twentieth century sweeps to its close, we will be spending our thought and effort on an ever smaller number of the earlier masterpieces and problems. These losses, to be sure, reflect the ebbing of a narrowly philological discipline. But this withdrawal has already left at least one masterpiece, *Beowulf,* stranded far from its contexts, and can one say that Chaucer is not in danger?

This brings us to the problem of courses in contemporary literature. Not too long ago one could suggest—and only half in jest—that it would soon be time to open up the nineteenth century for scholarship. But by now we have run to the opposite danger of giving so much time to the contemporary that we are seriously neglecting the established classics of our literary heritage. The seasoned judgments that come from rereading, the biographical information we need and want—these are not available, and the literary progeny are not yet conceived. To see books in proper perspective we need the help of distance. It was a witty and perhaps wise Frenchman who said that about the contemporary there is no criticism possible, only conversation.

Perhaps more important than this tendency of the graduate curriculum to move forward in time is its growing diversification of subject. American literature, once completely neglected, has already established itself so firmly—at least in the universities—that the English side of the "English" curriculum is in need of protection. In one university I recently visited there were seventeen courses in American literature, but only three (including linguistics) in English literature up to the Renaissance. The awareness of excellence, the experience of greatness, is not necessarily a byproduct of long study of the American short story.

There are other disciplines which started in the English department and are now moving toward autonomy. Folklore is one. Linguistics has in many schools become an independent discipline and has its own chapter in this volume. Comparative literature sometimes develops from an interest in literary theory and criticism, sometimes from a realization that a concentration can be "horizontal" as well as "vertical"; instead of holding a student responsible for knowing a single literature studied more or less chronologically, might it not be as legitimate to demand a single period—say the Renaissance—in its several literatures? Such a program might well extend beyond literature to the fine arts, to the history of ideas, to history itself. Of these interdisciplinary graduate studies the marriage of literature and social science called American Civilization or American Studies is rapidly establishing itself in the curriculum.

SOME COUNSELS OF PERFECTION

Somewhere in his graduate program the student should have elementary exercises in historical criticism, the study which helps us to read a work of literary art almost as its contemporaries did. The approach is very useful indeed for sixteenth, seventeenth, and eighteenth century study. Primarily, the technique will send a student to the Oxford English Dictionary for the approximate meaning of words which look familiar but which have had many changes in sense. A student of Shakespeare will find this discipline indispensable; Shakespeare's "fancy," whether in the heart or in the head, had a quite different sense from the twentieth century word. The corpses which lie "balk'd in their own blood" will be visualized only when the word "balk" is looked up. "Assume a virtue if you have it not" was not an incentive to hypocrisy when Shakespeare wrote it, but a sound moral counsel.

In the history of critical terms–a field in which more activity is long overdue–the word "imitation" is usually misunderstood and so are "nature" and "wit." A student of seventeenth and eighteenth century philosophic writing soon learns that "enthusiasm" has shifted its meaning; "gothic" also changed with the times, and so did "influence." What did a writer intend to mean, and what did his readers understand him to mean? This is a question which must be asked for all our older writers.

In his graduate study, if not before, a student should become aware of the importance of the learned journals in his field. He will find a great amount of detailed information in the journal files, short though the articles may be. He will learn to search the journals and their indexes for small items which may be very useful for him and which may never get published in book form. He will find book reviews helpful also, for these often have comments on scholarly methods as well as evaluations. The function of the learned journals in communicating new discoveries quickly is thus accompanied by their function in improving the tools of our craft.

It is probably useless to suggest that an acquaintance with the King James version of the Bible is indispensable for all students of English and American literature up to 1925, at least. For three centuries the King James version was in virtually every home; it was almost universally read; and its impact on style and ways of thinking was phenomenal. The Bible became one of our greatest classics; not even the works of Shakespeare have been so widely influential on English and American authors.

Fields like Comparative Literature or American Studies have special extraliterary requirements that cannot be discussed here. But some requirements traditionally connected with the PhD in English need review—and perhaps reassertion. Old and Middle English, as was hinted earlier, may be losing their importance as the curriculum tends to concentrate on later periods. Insofar as these are studied to make their literature accessible, they open the question whether other dead languages with greater literatures might not be more appropriate. Some schools have for many years offered an option of either Greek or Latin in place of Old or Middle English. And if access to literature were the only objective, the choice should clearly go to a classical language. But knowledge of earlier English is indispensable for understanding later writers—Shakespeare among them. Should we give a PhD in *English* to someone who has no knowledge of the English language? And if our students leave us without knowing how to read Chaucer, have we not deprived them of a valuable part of their birthright?

In this extended discussion of what is to be taught in a graduate program, little attention has yet been paid to how it is to be taught. Ideally, graduate instruction should differ from undergraduate instruction in some significant ways: classes should be very small; the teacher should be aware of the strengths and interests of each student and make his assignments with these in mind; and students should make themselves responsible for acquiring elementary information. But, especially in the larger graduate schools, these ideals can be only incompletely realized. Almost all students will need introductory work in some areas; some will have come from inadequate undergraduate programs, some with undergraduate majors in remote fields. Not many schools can provide an environment like the Princeton Graduate College in which graduate students are immediately brought together in an environment which encourages independent study and a professional attitude.

For many reasons most schools find it desirable to open certain courses to both undergraduates and graduates or in some way provide credit-carrying courses for graduate students that are hardly distinguishable in size and content from undergraduate courses. One problem here is to start the courses at a sufficiently elementary level and yet, before the end of the semester, make them worthy of graduate credit. Another problem is to make sure that these courses do not fill a student's program to the exclusion of advanced, purely graduate courses.

THE SEMINAR

While there is need, possibly increasing need, in the graduate school for lecture courses and discussion groups, it must not be forgotten that the characteristic teaching device of a good graduate school is the seminar. Any graduate program that does not require a substantial amount of work in seminar courses is *ipso facto* suspect. At its best, the seminar consists of a small group of advanced students and a professor. The professor's function is to introduce the students to a special field of study. This should be a field in which the professor is well acquainted and to the advancement of which he has made some contribution. He will present the historical background and indicate some of the present trends; he will also give a preliminary bibliography, with critical comments. Then he should introduce some of the major problems which are yet unsolved. The students select, after consultation, the special topics which they wish to study. Later in the course each student will present to the seminar the results of his work. There will be discussion, friendly but critical, from the professor and the other members. Not only the results but also the methods used by the student will come under scrutiny.

A good seminar lives up to its derivation, from semen, "seed." Since seminar reports quite often develop into dissertations, the device does act as a seed bed. The students and the professors alike plant ideas, these are fertilized and cultivated, and the fruits are frequently gratifying. In a seminar, it should be evident, the students do not have a given mass of material to be examined on. They are likely to turn up questions which the professor cannot yet answer.

The effectiveness of any seminar can in some degree be estimated. Obviously the professor should know his field very well. His bibliography should be both extensive and up to date. If his references fail to include significant items, his knowledge is in-complete. If there are no citations to recent or contemporary articles in his bibliography, the professor is not keeping up with the journal literature. If a seminar has been going on for some years, at least some of the seedlings should now be bearing fruit in the form of books or journal articles.

A seminar can be productive only if its size is held within reasonable limits. It must be small enough so that there can be real discussions, not large enough to encourage the exhibitionist student to become a nuisance. A seminar can be too small; when it is, the professor is hesitant to enforce proper academic standards. But the greater danger, as the graduate schools increase in student population, is that the department, hard put to accommodate the masses, will admit so many students that the seminar becomes virtually another lecture course. Yet of a verity, in every English department can be found at least one professor, oblivious and garrulous, who has always addressed a small seminar "as if it were a public meeting." He always will, too.

At its best, the seminar can also be a very effective proving ground for those planning to teach in college. A seminar report is a test not only of a student's diligence; it demonstrates his ability to organize and present his materials. Thus, the seminar can be an excellent basis for estimating the probable classroom success of the students. The professor has a chance to watch the impact of the student on a group of his peers, to note the way he responds under questions, to appreciate—grossly, perhaps, rather than minutely—the amount and quality of intellectual honesty. Largely on the basis of impressions from seminars the professors will make their recommendations. This is not an inadequate or improper basis; performance in a seminar is an excellent predictor, much better than impressions formed from examination papers only.

THE COMPREHENSIVE EXAMINATION

At some point in graduate training will come the examination that is decisive. It may come as early as the end of the second year, or at the very end, after the dissertation is completed. It may be written, or oral, or both. The most usual time is after course work is almost completed but before attention is completely focused on the dissertation—say after the third of the expected four years.

The nature of this examination will define, at least as much as course offerings, the kind of graduate study that is really being demanded and the standards of achievement expected. Students will choose courses that are related to its demands and avoid those that are not. Their private study, even their choice of leisure reading, will be done in its shadow. The best students will, like the others, look forward to it with apprehension and may become so nervous that the examination will not be an accurate measure. A single poorly worded question, or a chance remark at an oral, may lead to strangely distorted ideas of what is expected. It is necessary that such an examination be constructed and conducted with the greatest care and that the students know, as precisely as possible, what will and what will not be expected of them.

Literary history is invariably central to this examination. The older idea was that the student should be responsible for everything in English and American literature (and the scholarship thereon) from *Beowulf* to the present—or at least until the end of the nineteenth century. As other demands were added and as scholarship multiplied, this idea became totally unrealistic, and modifications developed that left the central concept unchanged. Usually these involved lopping off a few centuries at the beginning or a century at the end, or allowed the student to omit several periods. Some universities are now using lists of books or authors around which the examination will focus. For at least one section of the examination, some allow the student to designate a period, area, topic, or genre; some will allow a student to submit a reading list. But there is distressingly little information as to the effectiveness of the several kinds of examinations. And many times the examination questions show no clear relation to the objectives set by the curriculum.

Here is a problem that needs further study. For the moment it is worth repeating that the objectives the student will work toward are those he thinks are implied by the examination. He will do this no matter how clearly the department spells out its philosophy, no matter how carefully the curriculum is planned. It would be imprudent of him to act otherwise.

INTRODUCTION TO COLLEGE TEACHING

The primary aim of graduate study continues to be the production of scholars disciplined in extending the boundaries of knowledge. We can grant that normally the best scholars make the best teachers and that the disciplines of the graduate school promote virtues essential to good teaching. But since 90 percent of the PhD's in English go into college teaching, should not graduate study also include direct preparation for the college classroom? Training in seminars is good, as far as it goes, but does it go far enough? Graduate departments of English have some responsibility to equip their students for the careers in which they expect to earn a livelihood.

Some departments have taken this responsibility seriously. There is a quite respectable precedent, for Professor C. N. Greenough taught a graduate course in English composition at Harvard in 1913, designed for those going into college teaching. Since most of the new PhD's will be teaching freshmen for several years, we should provide them with a course in rhetoric. I have noted an almost complete lack of such courses. To be sure, there are plenty of courses in creative writing, but these will not serve the purpose. We are neglecting the proved value of rhetoric as a teaching tool and to our detriment. Also, as a reasonable protection to the undergraduates, each graduate student headed for teaching should satisfy the speech department that his speech is adequate or can be made adequate with special exercises.

What is encouraging is the growing number of graduate departments that are now recommending or indeed requiring teaching experience for the PhD in English. In a few institutions the school of education offers some of this work, but normally it is the business of the subject matter departments. There are, of course, dangers in any student-teacher system. Teaching assistants form a pool of cheap labor and can be exploited, overworked, and underpaid; there is strong temptation to keep an assistant long after he has learned the essentials and is no longer getting very profitable experience out of his teaching. Here a university must protect both its student teachers and its undergraduates. After all, just what percentage of its freshmen can a university afford to have taught by assistants only? How much supervision and training for its student teachers is it obligated to provide?

Even without formal courses, most English departments help their teaching assistants—less or more. These teaching assistants are inducted into their college classrooms in a variety of ways. They all have a syllabus of the course, which they are expected to follow. Some departments lead the new teaching fellows to the classrooms and firmly close the doors. Other departments induct the new assistants more carefully with frequent conferences and class visits. Others assign one or two neophytes to a master teacher, in an apprentice-type plan, by which the apprentice visits the master's classes and the master returns the visits. Personal supervision of the neophytes, accompanied with carefully supervised teaching, is no longer rare. No doubt this plan will grow, as the old idea that the classroom of a college teacher is inviolate gradually loses its force.

A real apprentice plan is both sound and promising. Teaching is an art. Back in the Renaissance, artists used apprentices to grind colors, then to mix paints, to prepare canvas, and to work on background and draperies, until the apprentices became masters themselves. Similarly, a graduate student may be assigned, perhaps in his second year, to a master teacher—a teacher from his own department, not from the school of education. With his master he will be learning about planning reading lists, making tests, reading some student papers, and conferring with students. Such an apprenticeship can lead to a teaching assignment, most probably in a freshman English course. This teaching will be to some degree supervised, and it may be supplemented by an introductory course in college teaching given (one hopes) by members of the English department.

THE DISSERTATION—AND AFTER

The PhD program traditionally culminates in a dissertation, still usually described as "a contribution to knowledge." This is a statement capable of some interpretation, as every wise man's son doth know. We must not confuse quantity with quality. A 600-page dissertation is not necessarily three times as good as a 200-page one. The dissertation should show that the writer knows and can use the appropriate tools of scholarship. The sources of information should have been traced and analyzed; the range and style of the citations should show both diligence and accuracy. The available writings on the topic should have been carefully evaluated. The writer should have clearly demonstrated the ability to control and present his material effectively. He should also reach sensible conclusions for which his materials and his presentation are suitable and adequate. The style should reflect the writer's personal culture, his alertness, his sensitivity, his grasp.

The dissertation need not be encyclopedic. We should not judge it by the standards for the PhD in some French universities, where the dissertation is the mature *magnum opus* of a rich scholarly life. Our American dissertations should be judged as demonstrations of sound scholarly training and promise, coming at the beginning rather than at the peak of a scholarly career. They should serve as passports into the world of university teaching, as the first papers in a claim for citizenship in the republic of letters.

In brief, the dissertation should be regarded as a severe exercise in composition as well as in research and in the use of scholarly tools and methods, to be completed by a competent graduate student in a year of full-time work.

If this position is accepted, it may very well affect choice of dissertation topic and invite reconsideration of the phrase, "a contribution to knowledge." If the dissertation exists more to train the student than to increase knowledge, novelty of subject or discovery of new material need not be the most important considerations. A rather worn topic—say, a new study of Milton's imagery—may prove far more valuable to the student and lead to worthier publication than work on an author not sufficiently "done"—say, Sir Richard Blackmore.

In the 1930's under Norman Foerster, Iowa experimented with the idea of a short dissertation (ideally about sixty-five pages) in the form of a critical essay so finished that most of the scaffolding

—the footnotes and the research that lay behind them—could be removed. The idea was perhaps too radical and the standard too high; the experiment was gradually abandoned. But the idea that the contribution to knowledge might be a critical interpretation rather than a factual discovery was gaining favor quite apart from the Iowa experiment. It is probable that for many years now the best dissertations have been best because of critical insight rather than because they developed new material.

Regardless of the latitude allowed to the phrase, "contribution to knowledge," searching out a dissertation topic is a task of first importance. Since the student will be wedded to the topic considerably longer than the year he spends in writing the dissertation, it is a choice not to be entered into unadvisedly or lightly. But the choice should not be too long delayed. The graduate student who is still seeking a dissertation topic in his third year should bestir himself.

Quite often a dissertation topic may develop from a seminar report. Sometimes it is found by systematic search in the area of the student's interest, using lists of desiderata and opportunities for research occasionally published by scholarly groups. Sometimes it is suggested by the professor. This last is not without the danger that the professor may be consulting his own interests or riding his own hobbies. In any case, topic and proposed scope of treatment should be approved by a departmental committee. The professor supervising the dissertation will have most of the responsibility for guiding the student and evaluating his work, but it may be advisable to establish a thesis committee early so that the student is not wholly dependent on one man's judgment.

When the dissertation is finished, the student should have had the experience, the satisfaction, of having brought a large task to completion in all its details. One further obstacle usually remains, the final oral examination or defense of thesis. This used to be a solemn event, open to the public, at which any holder of the doctor's degree could ask questions of the new applicant for that honor. But it has declined in importance so that (except in those cases where it is combined with the comprehensive) it is the one examination that can be taken lightly. The dissertation has been at least tentatively approved or there would be no examination.

The more interesting the dissertation and the more able the candidate, the livelier will be the questioning; the dull will have an easier time.

On commencement day, when English departments say farewell to the new PhD's, the professors know that their efforts have not produced full-fledged ripened scholars. At least some of the new PhD's know this also. The department has been training promising young scholars, some of whom will become scholar-teachers. Our best young people will have realized that their graduate years have not made them either ripe scholars or brilliant teachers. So, they will keep on reading and studying. They will do more research; they will publish now and then, or perhaps frequently. Among the many rewards of college teaching, the profession to which their degrees have admitted them, they will come to cherish the opportunities to learn from their colleagues in all fields and from their students. Perhaps as other scholar-teachers have done, they too will come to appreciate Chaucer's line, "The lyf so short, the craft so long to lerne."

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DONALD J. GRAY

Articulation Between High School and College English

THE COLLEGE STUDENT and the college teacher of English almost always meet in a course in which one or the other will waste some of his time.[1] Primarily at fault is not the confused student, but the high school and college teachers who waste his time by teaching him too little about some things and too much about others because neither knows enough about what the other is teaching and thinks ought to be taught. Articulation—the efficient fitting together of high school and college English courses—is therefore first of all a matter of finding ways in which high school and college teachers can learn more about one another.

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[1] Oscar James Campbell in *The Teaching of College English* (New York, 1934), a report for the National Council of Teachers of English, remarks that students in freshman English courses are disappointed to be put to "threshing old straw"—the repetition of ill-learned as well as adequately learned material (pp. 17–19). For evidence that the students' disappointment has not abated in the past thirty years see Burton P. Fowler, "College Freshmen Tell Their Story," in Arthur E. Traxler, ed., *Selection and Guidance of Gifted Students for National Survival: The Report of the Twentieth Educational Conference . . . Held Under the Auspices of the Educational Records Bureau and the American Council on Education* (Washington, 1956), pp. 91–101; Alvin C. Eurich and John J. Scanlon, "Articulation of Educational Units," in Chester W. Harris, ed., *Encyclopedia of Educational Research*, 3rd Ed. (New York, 1960), pp. 87–92; *General Education in School and College: A Committee Report by Members of the Faculties of Andover, Exeter, Lawrenceville, Harvard, Princeton, and Yale* (Cambridge, 1953), pp. 12–18; *Bridging the Gap Between School and College* (New York, 1953); and Nevitt Sanford and Rose K. Goldsen, "Recent Research on the American College Student," in Nicholas C. Brown, ed., *Orientation to College Learning: A Reappraisal* (Washington, 1961), pp. 18–32.

The difficulty is that until recently high school teachers have been suspicious of the counsel of college teachers, and college teachers have been irresponsible in their counsel. In the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries college teachers specified what they wanted taught in high school English courses, but they failed to explain why or how they wanted certain books and rhetorical practices taught.[2] In the past two decades they have often compounded their irresponsibility by complaining that English in high school was not being taught as they wished, but neglecting to specify how or even what they wanted high school teachers to teach. But now high school and college teachers are beginning to relax the attitudes which kept them apart, and with increasing frequency and effect they are using old ways or inventing new ways to work together in order to provide a smoother transition between high school and college courses in English.

The methods by which these teachers are trying to connect their courses may be divided into three kinds. The first is to find ways to inform students of the troubles of the passage from high school to college. The second is to arrange for college and high school teachers to inform one another of the methods, standards, purposes, and achievements of their teaching. Both these first two practices have been common for many years; the distance between high school and college has never been so forbidding that some men and women of energy and goodwill could not talk usefully across it. Only recently, however, has a third and most promising kind of cooperation been widely effected, that by which the nature and content of high school and college English courses are actually changed so that they connect with one another more efficiently.[3]

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[2] For the history of the effects and alleged effects of college requirements on the high school curriculum see Edna Hays, *College Entrance Requirements in English: Their Effects on the High Schools, An Historical Survey* (New York, 1936); and William C. Fels, "Articulation Between School and College," *Educational Record*, XXXIX (1958), 110–112. For remarks on the indifference and irresponsibility of college English teachers see *The National Interest and the Teaching of English* (Champaign, 1961), pp. 27–30; and Erwin R. Steinberg, "Articulation: A Sermon," *College English*, XX (1959), 363–365.

The first set of practices, by which students are told that there are differences between college and high school courses, simply accepts the present inefficient relationship between the two and tries by warning and advice to limit its unfortunate effects on students.[4] The advice offered at College Days in high school and Orientation Weeks on college campuses is necessarily very general, directed as it must be to problems common to students who plan to attend different colleges or follow different programs. College freshmen who talk at formally arranged meetings with the principals or the senior class of their former high school can offer more specific advice and the warnings of sad experience. But although college freshmen know what is happening to them in their English courses, they do not often know why it is happening or what high school teachers can do about it. The program at Western

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[3] In "High School-College Liaison Programs," *English Journal*, LI (1962), 85–93, the NCTE Committee on High School-College Articulation reports that about half of the 110 colleges it queried were engaged in some form of liaison with high schools, and that most of these more than fifty colleges sponsored meetings between high school and college teachers. In 1938 an NEA committee reported that 78 percent of 423 colleges were working in one way or another to alleviate the difficulties of the transition from high school to college. But only about a third of these colleges were arranging meetings between high school and college teachers. See Alvin C. Eurich, "Transition from School to College," in Arthur E. Traxler, ed., *Modern Educational Problems: The Report of the Seventeenth Educational Conference . . . Held Under the Auspices of the Educational Records Bureau and the American Council on Education,* (Washington, 1953), pp. 28–37.

[4] For surveys of the many methods by which colleges inform high school students and teachers of what lies ahead in college see: J. Andrew Holley, "Next Steps in High School-College Relations," *North Central Association Quarterly*, XXVI (1952), 320–331; Alfred H. Grommon, "Coordinating Composition in High School and College," *English Journal*, XLVIII (1959), 123–131; "High School-College Liaison Programs," *op. cit.*; and a series of reports of panel discussions of this question published in *College Composition and Communication,* V (1954), 116–119; VII (1956), 93–96; IX (1958), 192–196; and XI (1960), 175–179.

Michigan University, however, brings high school principals on campus to confer not only with former students but also with the college teachers of these students, and presumably the principals return to their schools ready to tell their teachers and students about the intentions as well as the rigors of English at Western Michigan.[5] Some colleges allow high school students to see for themselves what college courses are like by bringing high school juniors to the campus to observe—or even attend—college courses as a way of preparing them for their senior year of high school.[6] In order to demonstrate in another way the purpose and requirements of college courses, many departments of English offer to mark and grade themes submitted by high school students. In addition, some departments arrange for conferences between the college teacher who graded the themes and the high school teacher of the students who wrote them, and some also furnish high school teachers with marked and graded themes written by their former students in the first weeks of college.[7] As this information becomes more specific, it also becomes less useful to students who do not plan to attend the school which provides it. But all these conferences and demonstrations of standards and expectations do at least alleviate for some students some of the troubles of their passage from high school to college. More important, these practices may also instruct high school and college teachers and administrators about the nature of the English courses which lie on either side of the passage and which must be changed if the inefficiencies of their relationship are to be resolved rather than simply accommodated.

For a long time now teachers have been developing other and more direct ways to inform one another as well as their students about the premises and results of their teaching. Over the past several decades there has evolved an extensive and somewhat disorderly complex of committees and conferences to tell high school and college teachers what they need to know about one another in order to integrate their teaching. By 1957, twenty-six states had committees or agencies working on problems of articulation; by 1959 there were committees in six more states; even more recently the National Council of Teachers of English committee on articulation has reported that the departments of education of forty states are aware of an urgent need for such agencies and are involved in one way or another in programs intended to inform high school and college teachers about one another. Other committees and many continuing conferences—Yale's MAT Conferences, for example, and the standing curriculum committee organized by the University of Washington and the Seattle schools—have been instituted by colleges or jointly by colleges and secondary school systems. Some committees and conferences are organized regionally, such as the committees on high school-college relations of the Northwest Interstate Council and of the North Central Association; still others are sponsored by the state or regional affiliates of a national organization, such as the state affiliates of the NCTE. Finally, some committees have been formed by or as national organizations. The Basic Issues Conferences of the Cooperative English Program, for example, was founded to define the questions which must be faced if the sequence of instruction in English is to be effectively revised. The Commission on English of the College Entrance Examination Board, founded to try to improve the training of teachers already in service, has devised sample syllabi and examinations to illustrate what high school teachers of English are doing and can do. Certainly the commission's 1962 Summer Institutes taught both high school and university teachers much that each group needed to know to solve the problems they share. And the NCTE's Committee on High School-College Articulation has collected information about the practices of articulation and published it in four articles which must now serve as the basic texts for all discussions of the problem.[8]

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[5] "High School-College Liaison Programs," *op. cit.*, p. 91.

[6] Grommon, *op. cit.*, p. 126.

[7] J. N. Hook, "How Can the Continuity in the Study of the Language Arts, the Social Sciences, and the Humanities in High School and the First Two Years of College Be Improved?" *Proceedings of the Fifteenth Annual Conference on Higher Education* (Washington, 1960), pp. 79-80. See also "High School-College Liaison Programs," *op. cit.*, and *College Composition and Communication, loc. cit.*

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[8] Steinberg, *op. cit.*, pp. 363–364; "High School-College Liaison Programs," *op. cit.* pp. 85–86. The figures cited by Professor Steinberg are quoted from *High School-College Articulation in the United States* (Tallahassee, 1958).

The activities of these committees and organizations are as various as their sponsorship. Most of the committees formed by state departments of education were organized to interpret and untangle college admission policies, but some have survived at least to offer themselves as instruments for the study of curriculum.[9] The State-Wide English Program in Tennessee and the North Carolina English Association, both organized by teachers themselves, have prepared and distributed model syllabi for high school English courses, and the NCTE affiliate in New York state has published descriptions of the first year English courses taught in the colleges of the state.[10] New Jersey's committee on articulation has arranged for high school and college teachers

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For a succinct although now outdated discussion of the activities of state and regional articulation committees see "High School-College Articulation," *School Review*, LIX (1951), 1–5. For the activities of state and regional agencies concerned primarily with the relationship between high school and college courses in English see NCTE Curriculum Series Volume III, *The English Language Arts in the Secondary School* (New York, 1956), pp. 463–466; W. S. Ward, "High School-College Cooperation in English," *College Composition and Communication*, VII (1956), 93–96; and "High School-College Liaison Programs," *op. cit.*, pp. 89–90.

For the Cooperative English Program see *The Basic Issues in the Teaching of English*, Supplement to *College English*, October, 1959; and Albert H. Marckwardt, "The 1962 Cooperative English Program," *College English*, XXIV (1963), 544–549. For the CEEB Summer Institutes see *Summer Institutes for English Teachers*, a pamphlet published at the offices of the Commission on English, 687 Boylston Street, Boston 16, Mass.; and Floyd Rinker, "Priorities in the English Curriculum," *English Journal*, LI (1962), 309–312. The reports of the NCTE committee on High School-College Articulation are "High School-College Liaison Programs," *op. cit.*; "What the Colleges Expect," *English Journal*, L (1961), 402–412; "But What Are We Articulating With?" *English Journal*, LI (1962), 167–179; and "A Blueprint for Articulation," *College English*, XXIV (1963), 400–403.

[9] Francis B. Nickerson, "A Four-year Look Toward College: The Oregon High School-College Relations Programs," *Journal of Higher Education*, XXX (1959), 31–36; Harold E. Telfer, "Curriculum Development Under the Michigan Secondary School-College Agreement," *National Association of Secondary-School Principals Bulletin*, XLIV (1960), 98–102.

[10] Charles F. Webb, "The State-Wide English Program in Tennessee," *College Composition and Communication*, VII (1956), 24–28; Francis E. Bowman, "Relating the College Curriculum to That of the Public Schools," in William H. Cartwright and William B. Hamilton, eds., *The Duke University Centennial Conference on Teacher Training* (Durham, 1953), pp. 54–60; Ward, *op. cit.*, pp. 94–95; "High School-College Liaison Programs," *op. cit.*, p. 91.

"by the hundreds" to visit one another's classrooms.[11] In Pittsburgh, Louisville, the Bay Area of San Francisco, and other areas, college teachers have lectured to high school classes and sometimes taught in the high school for a semester or a year; at Berkeley and Indiana University high school teachers have been invited to teach the first-year college course in English.[12] The committee for composition of the Articulation Conference of California has prepared a set of graded themes to illustrate standards in high school and college. Teachers at Syracuse, Illinois, California, Kansas, the four state supported colleges in Indiana, and over a hundred other colleges and universities have met with one another or with high school teachers to prepare and publish statements of their expectations and standards.[13] In Seattle, Kansas City, Wichita, and Portland, Oregon, college teachers together with high school teachers serve on committees to study curricula and methods of instruction, and in Pittsburgh, Denver, and Louisville, college and high school teachers have preserved associations created when they met to design Advanced Placement courses.[14]

Finally, and with undiminished frequency and enthusiasm, state committees, regional associations, local affiliates of national organizations, and college departments of English have organized countless conferences at which high school and college teachers have met to exchange ideas and consider common problems, sometimes scheduling a series of conferences all over a state, sometimes combining the conference with visits of high school and college teachers to one another's classrooms, sometimes (and perhaps most usefully) directing the conference to a single problem such as the grading of themes.[15] "This traffic between high school and college teachers will work to correct misinterpretation of the standards college teachers have at various times set for entering college students. Even when in the nineteenth century, college requirements seemed to prescribe the content and texts for high school English courses, college teachers were primarily concerned not that high school graduates remember the names of characters in a novel by Scott or the rhetorical devices in a poem by Milton, but that they be able to write a clear essay on the first, perhaps using some of the devices learned from the second.[16] Beginning early in the twentieth century, colleges have consistently used placement and entrance examinations which, in the words of one of the writers of the National Council's curriculum volume on the teaching of English in secondary schools, test the student's "ability to use language, not ability to label and underline forms."[17] In the past decade or so college teachers have again and again—in the tests they use, in their statements of expectations, in pamphlets, articles, and speeches—set forth what they expect entering college students to know about language and literature and how they expect them to use their knowledge. They expect a high school graduate to be able to distinguish between the main and subordinate ideas and to test the logical validity of moderately difficult prose. They expect him to be able to apprehend the structure and tone of prose and poetry of literary and historical significance, and to identify and recognize the function of common figures and common literary and mythological allusions. They recommend that he read literary texts in their entirety, that he read significant examples of each of the major types of literature, and that he read a limited number of works thoroughly rather than a great many superficially. They expect that he will be able to identify the most common literary genres and types and that he will be familiar with the common terminology of critical and rhetorical analysis. Increasingly they are adding to these expectations the hope that he will also be familiar with the common terms of linguistic analysis and know something about the history of his language. All these abilities should have been frequently exercised in high school in the writing of short, well-planned, mechanically correct papers on tightly defined topics which require students to explain or promote an idea, to find a meaning in personal experience and organize a narrative or description around it, or to analyze a literary text or a linguistic problem.[18]

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[11] Albert E. Meder, Jr., "Articulation of General Education Programs," *Journal of Educational Sociology*, XXIX (1956), 202–208.

[12] Bernard J. McCormick, "School-College Cooperation in Instruction," *National Association of Secondary-School Principals Bulletin*, XLV (1961), 353–356; Mark Schorer, "Notes from Berkeley," *College English*, XXIV (1963), 556–559.

[13] Byron Guyer, "Teaching High School Composition," *California Journal of Secondary Education*, XXXIV (1959), 169–174; James J. Lynch, "College Support for the High School English Teacher: The California Experiment," *College English*, XXI (1959), 73–80; Donald J. Gray, "College Support for the High School English Teacher: The Indiana Joint Statement," *College English*, XXII (1960), 29–32; Ward, *op. cit.*, p. 94; "What the Colleges Expect," *op. cit.*, p. 402.

[14] For the history and results of the study undertaken in Portland see Albert R. Kitzhaber, Robert M. Gorrell, and Paul Roberts, *Education for College* (New York, 1961), and Albert R. Kitzhaber, "Death—or Transfiguration?" *College English*, XXI (1960), 367–373. For the Pittsburgh-Carnegie Tech committee, see Edwin Fenton, "Working with High Schools: A Professor's Testimony," *High Points*, XLIII (June, 1961), 5–15, and McCormick, *op. cit.*

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[15] T. F. Mayo, "Integration of the Teaching of English in High Schools and Colleges in Texas," *College Composition and Communication*, VI (1955), 18–19; Cresap S. Watson, "What Do You Teach Them in High School?" *English Journal*, XLVII (1958), 152–153; Herman A. Estrin, "Articulation of College and High School English," *Improving College and University Teaching*, X (1962), 181–182. Estrin's report also contains an instructive list of specific topics high school teachers would like to discuss at future conferences.

[16] Hays, *op. cit.*, p. 71.

[17] NCTE Curriculum Series Volume III, *The English Language Arts in the Secondary School*, pp. 457–458; Hays, *op. cit.*, p. 73; David M. Litsey, "Trends in College Placement Tests in Freshman English," *English Journal*, XLV (1956), 250–256.

These statements clearly announce, in short, that college teachers expect entering college students to use, rather than simply to reproduce, their knowledge of language and literature. The statements do not go very far, however, toward clarifying the means by which these abilities are to be acquired or toward specifying the degree of proficiency expected. The surest way to specify means and ends is to plan courses which will fit together in a continuous and incremental sequence of instruction. For the most part, college teachers until recently have not tried to define the ends of high school courses by helping to plan such courses. They have rather tried to connect high school and college instruction in English only by tinkering with the freshman English program to make it more flexible. Remedial sections of freshman English for poorly prepared students, and advanced sections or exemptions for well-prepared ones, do testify that college teachers and administrators are aware of inefficiencies in the sequence and are willing to do something to reduce them. But at bottom, remedial sections and exemptions reinforce inefficiency. They implicitly assume, first, that colleges must accept extreme disparities in preparation, and further, that conventional as well as remedial sections of the first-year course are to one degree or another reviews of material and practices most students have been taught but only the few excused from freshman English have mastered.

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[18] Campbell, *op. cit.*, pp. 19–33; Clarence D. Thorpe, "Knowledge and Skills That May Be Expected of the High School Student Entering College," *National Association of Secondary-School Principals Bulletin*, XXX (1946), 93–106; G. Robert Carlsen, "From High School into College," *English Journal*, XLV (1956), 400–405; Robert S. Hunting, "What We Do Not Expect from High School Graduates," *English Journal*, XLVII (1958), 145–147; Garlyn A. Basham, "What Do the Experts Say About Subject A and English Proficiency?" *California Journal of Secondary Education*, XXXIII (1958), 466–470; "An Articulated English Program: A Hypothesis to Test," *PMLA*, LXXIV (1959), 13–19; Grommon, *op. cit.*, 127–131; "What the Colleges Expect, *op. cit.*, 402–405.

Advanced sections of the first-year course are another matter. Here college teachers accept only the by no means unfortunate fact that different people have different abilities, and they go on from there to invent a course which will challenge the abilities of both student and teacher. Yet to create and teach imaginative courses for unusually well-prepared freshmen still does nothing to increase the number of freshmen who will come qualified to enroll in them. The task of articulation is to make sure that each course in a sequence is an advance from the preceding course, and that most students who graduate from one course are ready to learn something new in the next. College teachers will commit themselves fully to this task only when they help to plan the courses their students will take before as well as after they enter college.

One way to help prepare students for college in high school is to enroll the most capable students in the equivalent of college courses while they are still in high school. At least one college at one time in effect instituted its remedial English course in high school; high school students were tested in their junior year, and those whose performance suggested that they would not be qualified to enroll in a conventional first-year course when they entered college were enrolled as high school seniors in a remedial course planned by high school and college teachers.[19] This same college and some others have tried to increase the number of well-prepared freshmen by helping to establish high school courses for which exceptionally able students receive college credit.[20] Other colleges have in effect put college courses into high schools by permitting students to enroll in college courses before they have completed the required high school curriculum.[21]

The Advanced Placement Program, which has brought many high school and college teachers together to plan courses and evaluate student writing, is the most ambitious of these plans to reduce waste by establishing the equivalents of college courses in high school. This program, like the advanced sections of a freshman course, will help only those students who in one way or another demonstrate unusual achievement before they enter the program. The committee which administers the Advanced Placement examinations in English, however, has opened up a dual attack which may affect the education offered to students of common as well as uncommon ability.

On a national scale, it has distributed course descriptions and sample examinations, in this way specifying the kind of reading at least some high school students can undertake, the kind of questions they and their teachers can and should ask in their reading, and the kind of tasks students should address in their writing.[22] Further, and perhaps potentially more important, the committee in a recent guide to the Advanced Placement Program has reminded teachers that "we do not know how far down the scale we can go, ... how good a 'normal' student can be scholastically."[23] Attempts by coordinators and curriculum committees to plan courses which will go farther down the scale, and to educate teachers in the uses of literature and writing assignments like those suggested for Advanced Placement courses, have in some high schools already begun to change courses in English offered to students of average as well as unusual talent.[24] Before the impetus and excitement of these attempts have subsided, they may have changed the nature and pace of courses in English offered to most students in high school and the first year of college.

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[19] Giles M. Sinclair, "An Ounce and a Pound: High School and College English," *College English*, XIX (1958), 291–295.

[20] *Ibid.*, Helen J. Estes, "College Level English in High School," *English Journal*, XLVIII (1959), 332–334.

[21] Murray M. Horowitz, "High School Students in College Courses," *High Points*, XLII (October, 1960), pp. 72–74; W. Todd Furniss, "The University, the High School, and the Superior Student," *Ohio State University Educational Research Bulletin*, XXXVII (1958), 169–171; and Broadus N. Butler, "High School Students and College Credit," *School and Society*, LXXXVIII (1959), 499. The Early Admissions program, inaugurated in 1951 by the Fund for the Advancement of Education, is still in effect, the Fund estimates, in about thirty-five colleges. See The Fund, *They Went to College Early* (New York, 1957), and The Fund, *Decade of Experiment* (New York, 1961), p. 88.

[22] *Advanced Placement Program: Course Descriptions*—referred to as the "Acorn" books and available from the College Entrance Examination Board, % Educational Testing Service, Box 592, Princeton, N. J., or Box 27896, Los Angeles 27, Calif.

In Portland, Oregon, for example, the faculties of nine colleges and universities in the state were invited by the school board to collaborate with high school teachers and an administrative committee of college teachers in the writing of a curriculum to be followed by all college-bound students. A graduate of this curriculum will have completed courses in English which are at least the equivalent of Advanced Placement courses usually offered only to exceptionally qualified students. He will have read many of the literary works suggested for Advanced Placement courses, and he will have read these works with close attention to structure, characterization, the function of image and symbol, and other matters of literary character and interest. He will also have studied the history of his language, and he will have written many short expository and analytical papers on topics suggested by his close study of literature and language.[25]

In Nebraska, to cite another example, a group of elementary and secondary school teachers from all over the state met with college teachers to prepare a course of study in English which extends from kindergarten through the first year of college and is intended not just for college-bound but for all students. By the end of ninth grade, these students will have been taught to write full-length essays, to recognize common biblical and mythological allusions, and to use some common critical terms to analyze the operation of words and figures in literary texts. By the end of twelfth grade, they will have been instructed in the history of their language, the characteristics of genres, and the habits of close analysis as they read books chosen from a list which ranges from *Huck Finn* to Lockhart's life of Scott, from *Our Town* to the *Meditations* of Marcus Aurelius.[26] Undoubtedly, as their authors recognize, these recommendations and the hopes they embody will be modified as the courses are taught. "Teachers must begin somewhere," the authors of the Nebraska curriculum remark in the face of their uncertainty about where to place certain books and ideas in the sequence. But the important matter is not that these teachers are uncertain. The important matter is that despite their uncertainty so many teachers have agreed on courses so ambitious in their reach and pace and so profound in their implications for the courses conventionally taught in high school and college.

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[23] CEEB, *A Guide to the Advanced Placement Program 1961–62* (New York, 1961) p. 11. See also Charles R. Keller, "The Twelfth-Grade Problem," *National Association of Secondary-School Principals Bulletin*, XLV (1961), 342–349, for a cautious hope that the Advanced Placement Program may be one of several beginnings in planning a renovated and flexible high school curriculum in elementary and secondary schools. This hope is already partly realized in the new advanced placement program in composition sponsored by the three Iowa institutions of higher learning and the public high schools in almost all of the larger high schools in Iowa.

[24] For the activities of coordinators between high school and colleges and the establishment of curriculum centers see "High School-College Liaison Programs," *op. cit.*, p. 91; and Webb, *op. cit.*, pp. 27–28.

[25] Kitzhaber, Gorrell, and Roberts, *op. cit.*, pp. 55–93.

The beginning represented by programs such as the Portland and Nebraska curricula is now being extended by the Commission on English of the College Entrance Examination Board and the Curriculum Centers sponsored by the United States Office of Education under its Project English. The Commission on English, which in the summer of 1962 conducted a series of institutes for high school teachers, has since published sample syllabi tried out in their classrooms by teachers who attended the institutes.[27]

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[26] *A Curriculum for English*, published in 1961 and available from the Department of English, University of Nebraska, Lincoln, Nebr.

[27] *Summer Institutes for English Teachers*, p. 8; "English Curriculum Centers," *College English*, XXIII (1962), 677–679; Robert C. Slack, "A Report on Project English," *College English*, XXVI (1964), 43–47. The syllabi, bibliographies, and evaluations of the 1962 Commission on English Institutes are now available from the Materials Center of the Modern Language Association, 4 Washington Place, New York, N. Y.

The plans proposed by the Project English Curriculum Centers are more various. At the University of Nebraska center, the Nebraska course of study is being tested and refined. The center at the University of Oregon is working on a program for all students in grades seven through twelve; the center at Carnegie Tech is planning a program for college-bound students in grades ten to twelve; and that at Indiana University is developing different curricula in language, literature, and composition for slow-learning, average, and unusually talented high school students. The center at Northwestern University has concentrated on the teaching of writing at the junior high school level, while the center at the University of Minnesota is planning high school courses in which the study of the history and development of language is undertaken as a humanistic pursuit.

However varied their plans, the proposals of the CEEB summer institutes and of the Project English Curriculum Centers have in common certain practices and assumptions like those which make the Portland, Nebraska, and similar courses of study such promising beginnings. First of all, these courses are usually prepared by high school and college teachers together—not by either group alone, not by high school teachers or administrators with the help of professional curriculum consultants, but by teachers who day after day will encounter in their classrooms the consequences of their recommendations. Further, these recommendations will not simply be broadcast to the profession in the hope that someone will try them out. They are recommendations to a specific educational system in which they have been or will be tested and refined. More promising yet, in all these projects, high school and college teachers apparently have agreed that the study called English is the study of what language is and how it works in the books students read and the themes they write. Implicit in this agreement, and sometimes explicitly stated, is the assumption that however beneficial courses in English may be in promulgating the ideals appropriate to a democracy and producing literate citizens to serve it, their fundamental purpose is to engage students in a study worth undertaking for its own sake.

Finally, the teachers and administrators who are working out these programs seem ready to agree not about the least that should be taught, but about the most that can be taught to most high school students. The courses planned or written so far may prove to be impractical, their assumptions too sanguine, and their pace too ambitious. But if high school and college teachers in cities as large as Portland and Pittsburgh and in entire states such as Nebraska and Indiana can cooperate to prepare and test courses so promising, then these same teachers can agree to repair their original recommendations, and similar groups in other cities and states can agree on similar programs written to reproduce the successes and skirt the failures of these models.

If these courses contain promises, they also identify some problems. One of the problems is the difficulty of deciding what should be taught at each level of the sequence or at least of distinguishing between what should be taught in high school and in college. A consensus about the matter to be taught at different levels may emerge as more, and more specific, courses of study are written. At the same time the difficult question of proper ends of secondary and higher education will be implicitly answered by the creation of high school courses in which the traditional purposes of liberal education will appear in a curriculum which moves toward vocational and social ends as well.[28] But to begin to write a course of study, it is necessary to decide what students should and can learn in ninth grade, and in twelfth grade, and in the first year of college. And unless these specific decisions proceed from some general agreement, they are likely to produce not a consensus but a chaos from which the graduates of different schools will emerge knowing no more in common than they do now.

Certain general schedules of responsibility have long been available. In 1934 a report by Oscar James Campbell had assigned high schools the tasks of teaching students enough grammar to express themselves adequately, enough about thinking to enable them to sort out major and subordinate ideas, enough about literature to recognize major literary forms and to grasp the arrangement and development of ideas in "appropriate texts of either prose or poetry," and enough about the possibilities of writing to be able to consider different ways of achieving clearly defined ends. In college the student would be taught how to realize more sophisticated possibilities of writing and to investigate more thoroughly the history of literature and the meaning and pleasures of specific literary texts.[29]

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[28] Kitzhaber, Gorrell, and Roberts, *op. cit.*, pp. 50–51: "High school should begin seriously the business of offering students a liberal education, not merely prepare them to get one later" (p. 51). See also Henry Steele Commager, "A Historian Looks at the American High School," in Francis S. Chase and Harold A. Anderson, eds., *The High School in a New Era* (Chicago, 1958), pp. 2–19.

Except for the recent insistence that entering college students know something about the history of the English language, Professor Campbell's division of responsibility has been little changed in the past thirty years. The program set out in the NCTE volumes on the English language arts in elementary and secondary school, if the priorities there are recognized and respected, will produce high school graduates who can read and think as well as Professor Campbell could wish, and who perhaps can write with more attention to specifically conceived audiences than he required.[30] The articulated program published by the Basic Issues Conference draws firm lines between the content of high school and college English, but it usually subtracts from rather than adds to responsibilities already assigned and accepted. The report recommends, for example, that literature in high school be taught "as literature, not as documentary evidence for the social sciences," thus urging that the high school English teacher be liberated from several of the responsibilities with which he has been burdened, in order that he may concentrate on a fundamental responsibility to his subject. The report also postpones the study of literary history until college and places in high school the entire responsibility for teaching the fundamentals of composition, echoing Professor Campbell's hope: "There should be no need for a *required* course in *elementary* composition in college."[31]

But what does it mean to maintain, in the words of the Basic

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[29] Campbell, *op. cit.*, pp. 19–33.

[30] NCTE Curriculum Series Volume I, *The English Language Arts* (New York, 1952), pp. 274–301, 319–327, 374–413; NCTE Curriculum Series Volume III, *The English Language Arts in the Secondary School, op. cit.*, pp. 123–201, 293–403.

[31] "An Articulated English Program: A Hypothesis to Test," *op. cit.*, pp. 14, 17.

Issues report, that "the high school graduate should be able to express a point of view well, organize a judicious book report, write an interesting biography, and show some knowledge of various stylistic achievements"? What does it mean to say that a high school graduate should write "reasonably good sentences and paragraphs," or that he should write clearly, concisely, appropriately, and well?[32] What does it mean to say that a high school graduate should understand *Hamlet* or *Lord Jim*? Or that he should apprehend the function of metaphor in the first and structure in the second? How much of the history of his language and literature should he know, and, more important, how should he use this knowledge? General statements about the ends to be achieved in high school and college English are necessary landmarks in the uncertain landscape of curriculum revision. But to depend on them alone to guide separate groups of teachers who must independently translate them into study plans and reading lists is as treacherous as trusting that a usable consensus will be created by local decisions unguided by a generally accepted schedule of responsibility. Different teachers in different localities or different stages of the sequence will continue to use the same big words to describe the different things each is accomplishing in his course, and all will soon drift again into their old uncertainty about one another's practices and accomplishments.

It is necessary, therefore, that these general statements be supplemented by more specific definitions of what college and high school teachers expect of the courses they are working together to create and teach. One way to specify the responsibilities assigned to high schools and colleges is to establish some national agency which will in effect administer and perhaps help to shape a consensus as it disseminates information about new curricula and teaching practices and evaluates them by standards formulated by a group of high school and college teachers. (This survey and evaluation should include first-year college courses, which should be judged by whether or not they represent an advance in the sequence students have been following since elementary school.) Project English of the United States Office of Education, now called USOE English Program, the NCTE committee to evaluate curriculum materials, or the recently founded Commission on the English Curriculum of the National Council of Teachers of English could perform this service.

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[32] Will French and associates, *Behavioral Goals of General Education in High School* (New York, 1957), p. 97; "English Language Arts in the Comprehensive Secondary School," *National Association of Secondary-School Principals Bulletin*, XLIV (1960), 45–48. This latter statement is of particular interest because it is a "position paper" of the NASSP Committee on Curricular Planning and Development.

Another way has been opened by a pamphlet published by the Commission on English, containing four sets of examinations in English designed for college-bound students in grades nine through twelve, a selection of student answers to each question, and an analysis and evaluation of each answer.[33] It would be useful to prepare and publish similar illustrations of the meanings at different levels of the vocabulary in which student writing is discussed: what is a well-defined idea, a coherent paragraph, an adequate development of a good topic in sixth grade, in the last year of high school, at the end of the freshman course in college? It would also be appropriate for college teachers, who have quite properly helped to devise courses to be taught to both terminal and college-bound high school students, to help distinguish and illustrate the ends any one course tries to achieve for different kinds of students—or at least to consider very carefully whether the ends are, or should be, really different.

Finally, college teachers, who have frequently specified the standards which they think high school teachers should require their students to meet, can with great profit perform the same service for themselves. If the first-year college English course does in fact advance students beyond the competence college teachers ask of high school graduates, then it would be instructive to illustrate for students and teachers at all stages in the sequence the competence which students are expected to demonstrate after they have completed their first year of instruction in English in college.

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[33] Commission on English (CEEB), *End-of-Year Examinations in English for College-Bound Students, Grades 9–12* (Princeton, 1963). In Erwin R. Steinberg, "Needed Research in the Teaching of College English," *College English*, XXIV (1963), 149–152, a report of a conference of fifty teachers and administrators convened by Project English to specify questions to which research should be directed, it is urged that standards be established and illustrated which will define the kind of writing which can be appropriately assigned to and expected of high school and college students. See also *The National Interest and the Teaching of English, op. cit.*, pp. 133–134; and *The Basic Issues in the Teaching of English op. cit.*, p. 8.

Yet another way to specify the standards and purposes of instruction in English is to write textbooks which will clarify ends by exercising means. The lack of textbooks adequate to the new high school courses now being created is serious enough to constitute a separate problem.[34] The teachers of these courses need anthologies which contain as many complete works as possible, chosen to represent adequately the history and characteristic qualities of the major movements and genres in English and American literature. They need grammars which put to use the formulations of contemporary linguistics, and rhetorics which put students to work practicing progressively more sophisticated devices of effective writing. They need handbooks, written by high school teachers in collaboration with scholars and critics who are also uncommonly inventive teachers, in which the principal genres and modes and the common methods and terminology of literary criticism are defined and illustrated. They need commentaries—historical and critical essays, critical analyses, and student exercises published in classroom anthologies or separate editions of standard literary works—in which individual works are set in the traditions which helped to form them and which demonstrate and carefully lead students to practice the several methods by which literature has been understood and evaluated.

Some principles and methods for such textbooks may be suggested by the National Council committees now commissioning appraisals of the works conventionally read in high school and studying the ideas put forward in Jerome Bruner's *The Process of Education.*[35] Again it would be useful if some national agency

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[34] Kitzhaber, Gorrell, and Roberts, *op. cit.*, pp. 49–50, 183. The most devastating analysis of weaknesses in current textbooks can be found in James Lynch and Bertrand Evans, *High School English Textbooks* (Boston, 1963).

[35] James R. Squire, "English at the Crossroads: The *National Interest* Report Plus Eighteen," *English Journal*, LI (1962), 381–392. Jerome Bruner, *The Process of Education* (Cambridge, Mass., 1960), a report of a conference of scientists convened to consider education in elementary and secondary schools, proposes that curricula be based on a careful analysis of the basic structure of each subject. Once discovered and arranged, the separate concepts of each subject can then be taught in an incremental order and in

—and again the NCTE, whose membership includes both high school and college teachers, seems most appropriate—would assemble a board of teachers to collect ideas about textbooks, discuss and refine them, and publish the requirements teachers think the textbooks they use should meet. By whatever machinery the strong currents of discontent with the textbooks now available are turned to move the creation of new ones, it is at least clear that college teachers, who have helped to design courses which demand new textbooks, can and should continue their collaboration in order to create textbooks which both fit and help to define the courses high school teachers are learning to teach.

A third problem which must be solved before any articulated program in English can be anything more than a handsome but impractical working model is the problem of teacher preparation. The new high school courses in English will require teachers who have been taught the history of their language, who have exercised some of the sophisticated capacities of English prose, who can use literary history and common critical methods to elucidate literary texts.[36] To educate teachers now in service to this standard, the Basic Issues Conference and the NCTE in its report, *The National Interest and the Teaching of English*, have recommended the establishment of regional seminars or summer institutes at which high school and college teachers can learn from one another what they need to know to teach their students

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clear relationship to the structure of the whole discipline. Some of the concepts around which Bruner suggests the study of literature be organized —the contest against evil; the sense of causality—are not unique to literature, and therefore the methods and principles by which they can be studied are not necessarily part of the peculiar procedures of literature or of the peculiar discipline of its study. But the matter of *how* literature states and develops these themes does pose questions about procedures peculiar to literature, and the study of how literature (and all written language) works —rather than the study only of what it says—may very well be organized around a series of concepts like those formulated for the study of physics and mathematics.

[36] See also the standards stated in *The National Interest and the Teaching of English, op. cit.*, pp. 40–42, and the detailed analysis of the problems of teacher training on pp. 31–87. The most complete treatment of the subject is Alfred H. Grommon, ed., *The Education of Teachers of English for American Schools and Colleges* (New York, 1963). This is Volume V in the series for the profession by the Commission on the English Curriculum of the National Council of Teachers of English.

more effectively.[37] In the summer of 1962 the Commission on English organized twenty such regional institutes which enrolled 900 high school teachers in courses in language, literature, and composition taught largely by college teachers from a syllabus prepared in consultation with high school teachers. As an important part—perhaps the most important part—of this training the Commission also arranged that during the following academic year the director of each institute visit the high school teachers to consider with them how the lessons learned in the institute's classrooms could be put to use in their own. At least one of the colleges which sponsored an institute has incorporated somewhat revised versions of its courses into its regular graduate catalogue, and many colleges and universities since 1962 have been offering summer institutes based on the Commission's formula.[38] Other departments of English conduct seminars for high school and sometimes for elementary school teachers during the summer and school year. Some state departments of education are now beginning to encourage this kind of training by awarding grants which make such institutes and seminars possible or enable teachers to attend them.[39] And at the end of 1964 the federal government, through provisions in the National Defense Education Act, made available support for summer institutes for both elementary and secondary school teachers.

The number of teachers who can be taught in seminars or institutes after their graduation from college, however, is but a small fraction of those who are being taught—and can be better taught—in the English courses they take before their graduation.

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[37] *The Basic Issues in the Teaching of English, op. cit.*, pp. 14–15; *The National Interest and the Teaching of English, op. cit.*, pp. 5–9.

[38] *Summer Institutes for English Teachers*. See also Arthur J. Carr, "A CEEB Summer Institute: Forethought and Afterthought," *College English*, XXIV (1963), 639–644, for the history of the summer institute at the University of Michigan and for a persuasive plea that courses like that taught in the CEEB institutes be included in the regular offerings of college departments of English. John C. Gerber's "The 1962 Summer Institutes of the Commission on English: Their Achievement and Promise," *PMLA*, LXXVIII, 4, Part 2 (September, 1963), 9–25, is the most complete description of the institutes. An expanded version of this report is available from the MLA Materials Center.

[39] Schorer, *op. cit.*, pp. 557–559; Marckwardt, *op. cit.*, pp. 547–549; Squire, *op. cit.*, p. 387.

For years college teachers have been complaining about the competence of their former students who teach in secondary schools. Now high school teachers are beginning to question, somewhat more temperately, the competence of their former college teachers. In western Washington, for example, a committee of high school English teachers submitted to some college departments of English a syllabus the teachers had written for their courses. When the college departments approved the syllabus, the high school teachers asked them what they were doing to prepare teachers who could teach it.[40] The question is fair; if college English teachers are to ask of their former students not only a certain knowledge of their subject but also a certain talent for elucidating it, then they are responsible not only for teaching their subject but also for helping to assure that others learn how to teach it.

One way for college departments of English to fulfill this responsibility is by taking a consistent interest in the planning and teaching of courses intended to train teachers. A conference on English education sponsored by the NCTE recommended that college departments of English cooperate with departments of education in the administration of courses in the methods of teaching English, and that, when possible, teachers of English education hold appointments in departments of English. At another conference over eighty chairmen of college English departments acknowledged their responsibility for courses in pedagogy, agreed that whenever possible the teachers of such courses hold appointments in departments of English, and observed that their commitment to the training of teachers "may call for the development of sustained programs of teacher education," by which the chairmen seem to have meant courses specifically planned to educate future teachers or teachers in service. In part as an outgrowth of this meeting of chairmen, the new Association of Departments of English gives promise of being one of the most effective agencies for improving the training of elementary and high school teachers.[41]

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[40] "A Blueprint for Articulation," *op. cit.*, p. 402. For other criticisms of the training high school teachers receive in college departments of English see Edwin H. Sauer, *English in the Secondary School* (New York, 1961): "The freshman English course in most of our liberal arts colleges will offer sufficient evidence that a liberal arts degree is, in itself, insufficient preparation for teaching" (p. 227); and George H. Henry, "English, the Life of English, and Life," *English Journal*, LII (1963), 81–85, a mistaken but spirited argument which by its very force demonstrates how vulnerable college English teachers have become to the accusation that they have somehow divorced literature from the life teachers encounter in their classrooms and students live outside them.

College departments of English will go a long way toward discharging these recently acknowledged responsibilities when they institute and administer courses intended to train teachers. But individual college teachers can go even further. The courses taught on college campuses to the high school teachers enrolled in the summer institutes of the Commission on English were organized on the assumption that teachers will learn to teach writing, literature, and language simply by studying writing, literature, and language—by engaging in these studies as liberal pursuits.[42] If this assumption is true of college courses specifically designed ultimately to achieve practical ends, then surely it is true of courses which need serve no other end but the study of English for its own sake. The great promise of the courses in English now being fashioned for high schools is that their first purpose is the liberal study of language and its uses. If college teachers teach their subject, in undergraduate courses in language and literature, as if knowledge about it and pleasure in its study were really worth having for their own sakes, then they will educate future teachers, not in the practical skills perhaps, but certainly in the attitudes and responses they will need in order to teach their students as college teachers would like them to be taught.

Outside their classrooms and beyond their campuses, college departments of English and individual teachers can do much to mitigate the difficulties of the passage from high school to college. By using the machinery of orientation programs already set up at many colleges, college teachers can inform high school students of the nature and purpose of college courses in English. By lecturing to high school classes, talking to high school administrators, counselors, and teachers, and offering to grade themes written by high school students, college English teachers can demonstrate what they do in their courses and what they expect their students to do. In these ways they can at the same time tell high school teachers something about the courses for which they are preparing some of their students. There are ways to tell them even more: by inviting high school teachers to visit or to teach first-year college courses; by arranging for college teachers to teach in high school; by publishing descriptions of first-year college courses and statements of the abilities in English expected of entering freshmen; by designating members of college faculties to work full-time helping high school teachers plan curricula; by organizing conferences at which high school and college teachers discuss specific disjunctions in the relationship between their courses or specific uncertainties in their knowledge of one another.

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[41] "Resolutions Adopted at a Seminar of English Department Chairmen Held at Allerton Park, December 2–4, 1962," *College English*, XXIV (1963, 473–475; James R. Squire, "The Profession Faces the Future: Developments Since Allerton Park," *ibid.*, XXVI (1964), 38–42.

[42] Helen C. White, W. Nelson Francis, and Albert R. Kitzhaber, "New Perspectives on English," *College English*, XXIII (1962), 433–444; Lawrence V. Ryan, "The Literature Course for Secondary School Teachers of the Commission on English," *English Journal*, LI (1962), 313–319.

From these practices by which teachers learn about one another and about the sequence of which their own courses are a part, it is a short step to the exercise of practices which begin to repair discontinuities in the sequence. College teachers who take this step will probably take many more, all leading away from their own classrooms and their library studies. They will serve with high school teachers on local, state, or regional committees to plan new curricula for high school English. They may find themselves on regional or national committees working with high school teachers to define and illustrate the competence students should achieve at different stages of their education, or setting out the requirements of adequate textbooks, or designing and organizing courses to improve the education of high school teachers. They will encounter related problems whose solution requires close cooperation with high school teachers and administrators: the problem of the number of students in high school classes, of the number of classes and the nature of other duties assigned to high school teachers, of the continuing necessity to adapt the patterns of a model syllabus to the individual talents of teachers and the social, psychological, or linguistic difficulties of individual students. And when these college teachers do return to campus, they will face a problem their efforts have created, the necessity of persuading their own administrators that their attempts to connect high school and college education are the equivalent of the services their colleagues have given to scholarship and to college education.

But all this work, necessary as it is, satisfying as it can be, will come to little if college teachers of English do not literally return to campus and work as hard on their own courses as they have on high school courses. It is not only a matter of preparing high school teachers more effectively in college, although that is a very important matter. The final problem presented by the new courses high school and college teachers are creating together is that the content and the pace of these courses promise to make the traditional first-year college course not simply wasteful but an entire and tedious redundancy. College teachers have become so accustomed to thinking of the first-year college course—in literature as well as in composition—as remedial that it is hard for them to think of it as anything but terminal. Their usual response to the possibility that students may soon enter college better prepared in English than ever before is, therefore, either darkly to predict that freshmen will always need some review or happily to recommend the abolition of the conventional first-year course.[43]

But an articulated program in English moves away from the first-year course as well as toward it. A first-year course still conceived as a review is therefore as reprehensible a violation of continuity as a repetitive high school course, and a hole where freshman English used to be is, if not a discontinuity, at least a missed opportunity to move students into college by putting them to work at tasks like those they will encounter in other and later college courses. Some college teachers, by working with high school teachers to strengthen the continuity of instruction in English before college, are creating the necessity to change the first course in English offered in college. All college teachers, simply by working where they stand, can use this necessity not only to reduce waste by eliminating a repetitious course, but also to strengthen the continuity of instruction after high school by inventing a first-year college course which will introduce students to studies and practices proper to higher education.

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[43] *If Articulation Succeeds—A Cautionary View*, CEA Chapbook published as a supplement to *CEA Critic*, XXIII (1961); Warner G. Rice, "A Proposal for the Abolition of Freshman English, as It Is Commonly Taught, from the College Curriculum," *College English*, XXI (1960) 361–367; "An Articulated English Program: A Hypothesis to Test," p. 17.

It is not within the province of this chapter to specify the characteristics of such a course.[44] It will not be the kind of course departments of English have in the past disastrously defined as "service" courses. It will, rather, study writing for its own sake, considering not only how language works but why it works as it does in different kinds of writing and at different periods in the history of literature and language. It will permit unusually able students to conceive for themselves topics and investigations which will introduce them to the character and concerns of different humanistic disciplines by requiring them to identify and explain the characteristic assumptions and to account for the characteristic rhetoric of these disciplines. It will set similar new tasks in reading and writing for other students, and it will require all students to look again and again at literary texts and personal experiences, to discover fresh meaning in them, and to use recently learned methods of analysis and expression to elucidate these meanings. A new course in freshman English will, in short, extend the knowledge and abilities learned in high school as it teaches students how language is used in the studies proper to higher education. It is the clear responsibility of college teachers to cooperate with high school teachers in every way either can devise in order to prepare students for such a course. But it is the final responsibility of college teachers alone to create a first-year course in English worthy of such students, a college course which will reflect a complete and intimate knowledge of what students have already learned, and which will set about its proper business of teaching them something new.

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[44] For a carefully thought out budget of deficiencies in the present freshman English course and some suggestions about its future, see Albert R. Kitzhaber, "Freshman English: A Prognosis," *College English*, XXIII (1962), 476–483, and Professor Kitzhaber's report of his study of student writing at Dartmouth, *Themes, Theories, and Therapy: The Teaching of Writing in College* (New York, 1963), especially pp. 73–79 and 131–150. See also Frederick L. Gwynn, "Sequence and Change in the College English Curriculum," and Richard Ohmann, "In Lieu of a New Rhetoric," *College English*, XXVI (1964), 1–2, 17–22.

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ROBERT W. ROGERS

The Department of English: Organization and Administration

EVERY DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH has the responsibility for maintaining the highest standards of teaching, of scholarship, and of public service. Fulfilling this responsibility requires coordinated effort on the part of all those within a department, and can only be achieved through imaginative organization and effective administration. Any account of such organization and administration must, however, recognize that English departments in American colleges and universities are varied in size, are subject to unique conventions prevailing in particular colleges and universities, and differ in the emphases they give to their various missions. One may generally distinguish small departments with well-defined educational goals for a limited and reasonably stable number of students, the larger but still homogeneous departments offering instruction to selected groups of students, and the departments of the large state and municipal universities with a variety of functions to perform and a diverse and apparently always growing student body to serve. The commitments of these large departments may range from introductory work to doctoral dissertations, from freshman composition to correspondence courses for adults, from instruction in literature to the teaching of English for foreign students. These departments may sponsor a critical quarterly, one or two scholarly journals, and perhaps a pedagogical one as well. Only a small proportion of the students taught will be English majors, but nearly all students on their campuses will take one or more English courses and bring to these courses a wide range of interests and motivations.

If a department is small, the faculty may be quite homogeneous, but a large department with multifarious tasks to perform will include a wide range of professional talents and interests —popular undergraduate teachers, creative writers, linguists, editors of journals, trainers of teachers, and bibliographers. Obviously, problems of organization and administration increase in complexity as the functions of a department multiply and the interests of its faculty become more diverse. Smaller and more homogeneous departments may accomplish the business of achieving coordinated effort with the simplest kind of machinery—weekly or monthly department meetings, informal conversations in offices and corridors, and telephone conversations. Larger departments must utilize more complicated mechanisms to ensure both consultation and prompt, effective decisions. Although no one scheme of organization can therefore serve for all departments of English, a survey of some present practices and problems, particularly those of larger departments, may be helpful, since many departments of English are now expanding rapidly and are having difficulties with the traditional and less complex forms of academic government which have served them well in the past but which are now inadequate.

Nearly all departments of English are organized around one person who may be called a chairman, a head, or an executive officer. He may be elected by the members of his department, or he may be appointed by the dean after consultation with department members. In some cases he is elected annually or for a stipulated term and is clearly responsible to his colleagues; in others he is appointed, often for an indefinite term, and is not bound by the votes of members of his faculty, though he is still obligated to consult his colleagues. Nomenclature varies, but usually the elected person is designated as a chairman and his position is regarded as, at best, semipermanent; one appointed, often with indefinite tenure, is usually called the department head.

There is, of course, some controversy over the merits of the chairmanship and the headship.[1] A head can accomplish business promptly; he contributes stability to a department. If he is a good one, he can build a very strong department; but if he is inept or arbitrary, he may well ruin the morale of his faculty before he is removed. Though procedures for securing his resignation generally exist, the effort can be accomplished only with much pain for all concerned, and the ill-will generated by the effort can plague a department for many years. A chairman, elected by a department and therefore more responsible to his colleagues, seems in theory to reflect the democratic spirit proper to academic societies, but there is no evidence that the institution of the chairmanship can guarantee the democracy so highly prized. Chairmen may be, and often are, more arbitrary than heads, and the task of voting a chairman out of office is often as difficult as the effort to remove a head. Because of the hierarchical organization of academic faculties, departments with chairmen are apt to become oligarchies with all significant power located in the hands of the full professors, or even in the hands of a single venerable worthy, not the chairman. A head, though empowered to make important policy decisions, may more readily ensure that all segments of his department are heard; if he is shrewd, there is likely to be a freer exchange of ideas within his department than within a department where all effective power resides in a group of full professors, whose prejudices, biases, and whims must be reckoned with by younger faculty members. But in most cases the difference between a chairman and a head is not of overriding importance, and often their responsibilities are the same. So from here on I shall simply refer to the presiding officer as chairman, regardless of possible variations in his title or his tenure.

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[1] Kirk H. Porter, "Department Head or Chairman?" *AAUP Bulletin,* XLVII (1961), 339–342.

However circumscribed a chairman's formal authority may be by statutes, traditions, and the will of his colleagues, his position due to circumstances is an important one; he is potentially the most influential figure in the operations of his department, since he is the one bearing the ultimate responsibility for its successes and failures. He is the department's principal personnel officer, charged with recruiting new members of its faculty, recommending promotions and salary increases, and assigning classroom duties. If a department is, as it should be, composed of professors distinguished by conviction and independence of thought, a chairman must frequently reconcile strong clashes of opinion and personality among his colleagues. He must be interested in what members of his department are doing, and he must help them increase their proficiencies in their tasks. He must see that his faculty has equitable work loads, and he must combat the tendency of administrations to utilize the supposedly "free" time of the faculty for work that can be done more cheaply and efficiently by others. A chairman can also help ensure the kind of freedom which any college or university faculty member must have to develop as a teacher and scholar.

In departments of small colleges where opportunities for intellectual stimulation may be limited, the chairman must combat the atrophy that can so easily overtake an active young member of his department and that can lead him to faculty politics, bridge, or alcohol. He must shield members of his faculty from the officiousness of local worthies outside the department—including the wife of the president—and within his department he must restrain the senior professor who once published an article as well as the elderly lady who insists on receiving chivalric treatment from her male colleagues, particularly younger ones. The chairman in a large department has different problems. He must seek to combat the impersonality that frequently accompanies magnitude; he must strive to inculcate the conviction that all members belong to the department and to unite them in common purposes. He must discourage parochialism and encourage his staff to transcend departmental boundaries and to seek the kind of cross-fertilization of disciplines so necessary to the best literary scholarship. A chairman cannot alone stimulate his faculty to original scholarship and excellent teaching, but he can create an atmosphere in which both may develop. He can sponsor judicious appointments, set up colloquia, and arrange for visiting professorships. He can support research through the imaginative scheduling of teaching duties and through assistance in obtaining grants-in-aid.

A chairman is also the official spokesman of his department to the principal administrative officers of his college or university. He must formally present the views of his faculty in matters of promotion, salary, and curricula; he must often argue the cause of his colleagues and their discipline before the professional managers to whom society has now entrusted the direction of higher education. He must also be alert to professional and scholarly developments outside his own college or university and must call the attention of his colleagues to them. No chairman can now, for example, afford to ignore the general concern for the improvement of instruction in English—an interest resulting in substantial support of the discipline by the federal government. Fellowships under the terms of the National Defense Education Act are providing help for new undertakings by departments of English that will increase the number of teachers and the variety of their competences, and the Congress has set up Project English within the United States Office of Education to sponsor cooperative research in English education not only at the elementary and secondary levels but also in the colleges and universities. To ensure that this support is used fully and effectively is a function of the leadership which an effective chairman should exercise.

In view of the circumstances that now prevail, one may guess that those departments which persist in the view that the role of the chairman is a nominal one or an assignment to be endured temporarily are quite out of touch with the present condition of the profession and are not equipped to cope effectively with the problems of tomorrow. It seems unlikely in these times that a good department can be built or maintained without a vigorous, devoted, and imaginative chairman.

To perform the duties commonly required of him, a chairman is normally given a lighter teaching load than other members of the department. Sometimes he may not teach at all, but more commonly he is helped by one or more deputies or executive secretaries. There are usually some easily defined areas in which authority can be delegated. An obvious example is the large freshman or sophomore course with its many sections and ever changing staff of graduate student teachers. Another is the whole area of graduate studies with its requirements for constant screening and advising of students, its time-consuming examination requirements, and its thesis committees. Some departments which sponsor a variety of highly specialized functions may even include divisions or centers or institutes, each with its own director responsible to the department chairman. Administrative complexity and channels of authority are by no means agreeable to most professors, but they need not be inhumane or inflexible. The chairman remains responsible for all the operations of the department, but he is freed from much routine. The unpleasant alternative would be to turn the chairmanship over to a skilled manager who could handle all details but who has no particular qualifications in the field of English.

A department chairman should appoint subordinates to positions of authority and make whatever other arrangements are needed to assure that work is done and that the faculty has the freedom necessary to intellectual life. But there is a point of complexity and size beyond which a department cannot go except at the expense of the homogeneity and flexibility which make for fruitful academic associations. Empire building is a function of politicians, not of academics; a large department should from time to time subject itself to a rigorous self-examination, considering, among other things, whether or not certain of its enterprises should be set off as independent administrative units. Although size may mean influence, financial support, and even prestige, the formalizations necessary in a large and heterogeneous group frequently prevent the kind of congenial association that is important to vigorous academic life.

No matter how much administration may be called for, consultation is the traditional basis on which academic business is conducted; policy determinations in academic matters should be the concern of the teaching faculty meeting together and openly discussing academic affairs. Growing enrollments, larger faculties, and increasing complexity of operations have, however, forced some significant modifications in this traditional manner of conducting departmental business. Even the chairman whose authority is most circumscribed has, as we have seen, been forced by circumstances to assume real authority. More and more, departments have come to rely on committees to substitute for the consultations once achieved in open faculty meetings.

Many of the larger departments have an executive or advisory committee elected by the faculty in accordance with procedures designed to secure adequate representation for all ranks within the department. Such a committee provides a chairman with ready access to representative opinion on pressing business and on personnel problems that cannot tactfully be discussed in larger groups. Departments also may have standing committees on courses and curricula, on personnel, on honors, on graduate studies, on fellowships, and on undergraduate majors; they may also appoint *ad hoc* committees to draw up recommendations on special problems. Commonly the chairman of the department appoints the committees, but in some departments committees are elected. And at least one department each year elects a committee on committees! The manner of selection, however, is probably not so important as observance of the principle that the committee mechanism will prove a reasonably effective alternative to the departmental meeting only if all members of a department are brought into it and only if appointments to committees are made with a due regard for the importance of bringing together a diversity of informed and representative opinion.

Because an English department can be only as good as its faculty, one of the most important concerns in its administration is that of maintaining the quality of its staff, an assignment calling for vigorous and effective recruitment of new staff and the encouragement of high standards of teaching and scholarship. Because the conditions of employment necessary to academic freedom and security are also conditions readily protecting mediocrity, the price of excellence must be high in energy, foresight, time, and imagination.

English departments are expanding rapidly, and many departments are now beginning to offer graduate instruction. Thus the competition for talent becomes keener each year, for talent is now in very short supply. No chairman can rest comfortably in the knowledge that his staff is fixed or stable; any of its members may present him with an attractive offer from another institution, and he must compete for new instructors with a variety of institutions offering seductive benefits, concessions, and varied professional advantages. Obviously in the competition for staff, the institutions with the most prestige and resources stand a good chance of success; but any chairman, active in recruiting, quick to detect excellence, and willing to work for the professional good of his faculty, may hope to do well. Those who are lethargic, timid, or not responsive to the interests and needs of a staff are going to have to content themselves with mediocrity.

Recruitment involves a search for new instructors and for established teachers and scholars. New instructors, ideally those who will have the doctorate when they take up their appointments, have in the past been recruited from universities with large graduate programs, but there is a growing tendency to look more carefully at the products of the smaller and hitherto less highly regarded schools as well. Fellowships, especially those authorized by the National Defense Education Act and those provided by the Woodrow Wilson Foundation, have distributed talent more widely among universities, so that no department, now anxious to secure the best, can afford to concentrate on a handful of major universities. There was once a tradition that those seeking appointments should never actually apply for a position but should, instead, be recommended privately by their elders for vacancies; the tradition is passing, so that any chairman now has a large and varied group of applicants to consider. But even so, the total supply is growing proportionately smaller.

A chairman normally has the ultimate responsibility for the appointments made, but most chairmen will ensure that appointments are undertaken only after consultation with members of the department. It must be admitted, however, that the profession has failed to develop very satisfactory grounds upon which decisions may be made. One basis for decision is the dossier containing basic biographical data of a candidate, his graduate record, and letters of recommendation written by graduate professors who know the candidate and his work. The formalized letters included in dossiers leave much to be desired. Every chairman can cite favorite inanities. No letter fails to contain a remark to the effect that "Mr X gets along well with others." Euphemisms abound: the tedious bore is described as "competent"; the unimaginative but industrious soul is labelled "solid"; the convivial young man well on his way to chronic alcoholism appears as "one who will contribute to the social life of any department"; and the neurotic woman emerges as a "brilliant but erratic girl who is interested in her students." Some of this cant may be attributed to the number of such letters that graduate professors must write; some of it arises from the perfectly human desire to say nothing that may prevent an individual's being considered for positions for which he may be well qualified. The letters included in dossiers are, after all, being read by different kinds of chairmen who are looking for many different kinds of candidates. It is true that chairmen do learn, after painful experiences, whose recommendations can or cannot be trusted; but greater efforts to set the interests of the profession above those of one's students are needed. It is unlikely that any document will ever take the place of the private recommendation.

The weaknesses of the dossier have prompted departments to insist on interviews with those being seriously considered for appointments. Most chairmen remain content with the kind of brief, hectic interview that can be arranged at the annual meetings of such organizations as the National Council of Teachers of English or the Modern Language Association, but experience with these interviews has brought some chairmen to the conclusion that the frenzy and hysteria generated in these marketplaces promote unwise decisions. The scintillating personality shines brightly in such a setting, and genuine worth is frequently obscured. More and more chairmen are coming to rely on visits to the campuses of many graduate colleges for interviews with prospective appointees on their home ground; some departments are indeed sending out three or four of their members whose judgments are trustworthy. Candidates selected in this way may then be asked to visit the campus of the college or university interested in them for further interviews. All these measures are costly, but the resources of a college or university can seldom be better employed, for mistakes in recruitment are not easily rectified.

Ideally a well-organized department is so arranged that every senior professor is supported by a junior member of the faculty who shares similar interests and talents and is ready to take over advanced work on short notice. Conditions in the profession are now, however, such that this ideal is rarely, if ever, achieved; senior faculty members may suddenly be whisked away, and those who have been carefully groomed to take over their work are even more apt to leave just when they are most needed. Under such circumstances any department will from time to time be forced to make major appointments involving tenure and requiring a "raid" upon the faculty of another academic institution. Such appointments call for more elaborate procedures than those generally followed in filling nontenure positions. Some departments, for example, appoint *ad hoc* committees to make recommendations for filling major vacancies; few of them would undertake major appointments without some considerable advice from elder and respected scholars throughout the country. Some departments, after settling upon the names of two or three scholars who should be seriously considered for an appointment, will invite prospective appointees to their campuses for public lectures, a procedure that may result in unwise decisions unless the performance during a lecture is considered along with a host of other qualities which any outstanding scholar should possess. Some departments, if they can get away with it, will bring prospective appointees to the campus as visitors for a semester, a quarter, or a year, so that all members of a department may become better acquainted with them. Such an arrangement is ideal from the point of view of any department seeking to fill a position; but few distinguished scholars and teachers, unless they want a new appointment desperately, are currently willing to risk the embarrassment of not being offered the position at the end of the trial. The arrangement is also at best inconvenient to the department of which the visitor is a regular member; for that department is left for a semester, a quarter, or a year, unable even to attempt filling the vacancy that may arise.

The search for prestige, or "national visibility," by departments and the situation in which there is a demand for talent far in excess of the available supply have led to a number of questionable practices that deserve the attention of every chairman. The desire to acquire prestige quickly and easily has given rise to the "star" system under which departments with limited resources attempt to find a scholar of national reputation, offer him a large salary as well as a light teaching load, and throw into the bargain assurances of leaves, secretarial assistance, and other support for research. It is assumed that the association of the name with a campus will give the department a reputation as one improving itself and will also attract students. That the student will probably never encounter the "star" bothers no one, and those who must do the chores of teaching are content happily to bask in reflected light—and to hope that the existence of a large salary within the department may eventually lead to higher salaries for all.[2]

The scramble for junior members of a department has become sufficiently intense in many instances to take on all the characteristics of a fraternity or sorority rushing, without the controls which are commonly imposed upon undergraduates engaged in such activities. The academic mind has been quite ingenious in contriving combinations of the hard- and soft-sell. One may note especially the manner in which rank, a commodity which uni-

[2] Not entirely unassociated with the "star" system, which is but a gambit in public relations, is the emergence on the present academic scene of the itinerant scholar who moves readily every two or three years from one campus to another, in search of an illusive perfection which academic life rarely offers. Although such scholars may exercise an invigorating but temporary influence on any campus, the chairman who fails to recognize one and who attempts to build a solid structure on such foundations may spend years repenting for his failure in judgment.

versities and colleges have in quantity, has been utilized in order to attract candidates to campuses, with the result that there has been a noticeable erosion of distinctions at nearly all institutions. One may note that the shortage has undoubtedly done much to improve salaries in the profession, a result which is good. But it should also be pointed out that too often the higher salaries are made possible by deliberately increasing the sizes of classes and at the expense of the quality of the instruction offered.[3]

It is fair to say in conclusion that the profession has probably not yet faced up squarely to the realities occasioned by a demand for college teachers far in excess of supply. Efforts to cope with it so far appear to have been bungling—and many of them are certainly not in the best interests of the profession and its responsibilities. The situation has not been helped by frequent interference from prestige-minded administrators. One may hope that chairmen will among themselves work out solutions in terms of better utilization of resources, more effective efforts to increase the supply of teachers, and a more careful observance of proprieties that in the long run work to the advantage of all. In the Association of Departments of English, organized in 1963, chairmen now have a new and most promising instrumentality for cooperative effort. The list of vacancies, published three times a year, is already proving useful in bringing chairmen and prospective staff members together.

Effective recruitment is but one aspect of departmental administration. Equally important is the vigorous and continuing assessment of the achievements of members of the department and prompt acknowledgment of merit in the form of promotion and salary increases. Traditionally the profession has held to the principle that younger staff members must pass through a probationary period before their achievements are recognized with rank and tenure. To regularize these probationary arrangements, most departments insist that an initial appointment to the rank of instructor or assistant professor be made for a term of years, usually three, at the end of which time the appointment may be terminated or be renewed for another period of years before tenure is granted. The arrangement, which in its operation may involve occasional unpleasantness, requires a department to work harder in regular and intensive examination of its members; but it has helped to maintain quality wherever it has been tried, and it has prevented the injustice of allowing faculty members to drift into a kind of *de facto* tenure without hope of status or advancement.

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[3] It may here be remarked that a number of colleges and universities, particularly the smaller ones, have attempted—unwisely, I think—to succeed in recruitment in terms of salary. Clearly, if the struggle is to turn on this issue, the institution with limited resources is inevitably going to lose out to the larger and wealthier universities. Smaller and less prestigious institutions would do better, I think, if they devoted some of their funds to the development of those academic advantages which they have over the large universities and which are permanently theirs.

Excellence that warrants promotion of staff members commonly involves teaching, fruitful activity in literary scholarship, and useful service in the work of the department. If any general rule of thumb may be advanced, it is that outstanding performance in one and good performance in two are normally required. There is, however, considerable difference in the degree to which any single department will emphasize one of these activities and in the interpretations which any department will place upon what constitutes excellence in each of these categories. Some departments may prize teaching above all else, though some of these will hold popularity to be a sign of successful teaching while others will make a student's learning the test of teaching ability. Some departments may prize literary research above all else, though some will, in fact if not in theory, take quantity rather than quality as evidence of successful scholarship.

This is not the place to argue the standards that should be employed; and one may doubt that a single standard, universally applied throughout the profession, is either useful or possible. Any department has, however, the duty of making clear to all its staff members the standards by which they will be measured, and every department has an obligation to apply these standards rigorously and justly. In the larger, more complex departments, the same standards clearly cannot be applied to everyone. Different functions call for different talents, and anyone who performs his appointed tasks well has a right to share in the rewards that academic life offers. Every member of a large department who is called upon to perform special services should be informed of the rules by which his work will be judged, and all members of a department must understand why different rules may prevail for those engaged in different duties.

Ultimately all decisions in these matters must, I suppose, be subjective ones, calling for the best judgment of those responsible for making them—the chairman, the full professors, the dean, and the president. Nevertheless, a number of practices exist throughout the profession that permit a measure of objectivity in these decisions. Effective teaching is often one of the most difficult achievements to assess. Vague rumor, miscellaneous gossip, and the superficial impressions of ephemeral administrators are too often the principal sources of information, even though reasonably trustworthy information can, with effort, be obtained. The classroom visitation by experienced and sympathetic professors is a useful institution, in spite of the strain likely to prevail in any classroom during such visits. The student poll, formal or informal, may supplement impressions formed during classroom visits. Even though student judgments may be erratic, the experience of departments which have resorted to polls has proved that student opinion is indicative of success in the classroom. Those taught are surely in a good position to say how effective their instructor or professor may be, though their attempts to explain the causes of success or failure may well be unreliable.

There are other indicators of the performance of classroom teachers. Evidence of ingenuity and imagination may appear in the kinds of textbook materials chosen, in the kinds of examinations given, in an individual's participation in professional groups devoted to the improvement of teaching, in the subjects of assigned papers and reports, in an instructor's ability to hold students in successive courses. Other evidence may appear in the comparative distribution of an instructor's grades,[4] in a comparison of the predicted with the actual performance of students in a given class, and in trends of enrollment in an instructor's courses. Finally there are reports from high school principals and teachers, parents, individual students, student groups, and academic advisors. There is, in short, no lack of information about an instructor's or professor's performance in a classroom; but systematic accumulation of it and discriminating and imaginative interpretation of it sometimes involve more energy and time than most administrations have been willing to give.

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[4] Not all instructors who give high grades are soft-hearted; some of them are able to call forth a student's best efforts. It behooves any instructor who consistently finds himself giving low grades and who complains about the poor quality of students to question first his own effectiveness in the classroom.

Measurement of achievement in scholarship is not quite so difficult as evaluating achievement in the classroom, but even so, quantity is too often confused with quality. In days when prestige is the goal of every college and university, quantity of publication seems to provide a speedy means of attracting attention. After all, quality in scholarship is not a property easily defined or recognized, and to harassed administrators the fact that something has been accepted for publication may appear sufficient warrant of merit. If, however, scholarship is to be a test of merit, an effort should be made to determine whether or not an individual's productivity results in at least meaningful activity. Good scholarship may be defined as the organization and presentation of significant discovery. A mere flash of brilliant insights is not enough, for it is a function of scholarship to organize knowledge. On the other hand, a well-organized presentation is not necessarily a sign of excellence; what is produced must make a difference. Good scholarship may set forth new facts that increase or alter our understanding of literature; it may be critical, modifying accepted views about aesthetics or our traditional ways of interpreting works of art; it may be creative, giving insights in the form of poetry, the drama, or fiction. It may even involve the patient compilation of a large body of information, provided that such study facilitates other useful investigations.

Even with such general conceptions of quality, those departments attempting to apply the test will have plenty of difficulties in making assessments, and they will generally resort to expert opinion. To combat the normal tendency to exaggerate the virtues of a colleague, they will consider the reviews of a man's work written by competent authorities in the field; they will consider which of the professional journals or presses have accepted their colleague's writings. They may wish to consider the kind of scholarly reputation which an individual has acquired in the profession, as that reputation may be manifested in appointments to committees of learned societies. More questionably, some departments seek further assessments of the scholarly accomplishments of an individual being considered for promotion from authorities outside the university. They will ask such authorities to write letters describing their views of the achievements of the colleague whose promotion is in question. One may doubt that such a procedure is more than a formality, for outsiders are commonly reluctant to interfere with the careers of those about whom they know relatively little, and their remarks tend to be equivocal or noncommittal. One university requires the appointment of an *ad hoc* committee to advise the president with respect to all recommendations of a department which involve tenure positions. This procedure, so sound in theory, appears not to have been conspicuously helpful; for, again, outsiders are commonly unwilling to interfere, except for the strongest reasons, in the recommendations submitted by those who have the ultimate responsibility for making them and who must live with them. In the United States there is no national university, and every college or university must in the end assess its own faculty. Efforts to throw the responsibility on to others are evasions of duty and are not likely to be successful.

Service to a department, college, or university offers still a third basis upon which recommendations for a promotion may be based. Of all the grounds for promotion it lends itself most readily to assessment; an individual's performance is not shielded by traditions of classroom privacy or by the prejudices, reticences, and courtesies that stand in the way of evaluating scholarly achievements. Nevertheless, from the point of view of the academic business of a college, service is often the most questionable of the three. Given the nature of college and university activities now, some people must be found to help with the chores of administration, to serve on committees, and to engage in some of the public services that society now asks of college and university faculties. If the teacher wishes to be let alone to work with his students, and if the scholar wishes to be free to pursue his research, he must be content to have others take on the necessary work; and he must recognize that anyone who is asked to perform a function, however unacademic, has a right to expect the kind of rewards the profession can offer, if he does well. He cannot expect to be rewarded if he performs his tasks in a dull or routine way and fails to make any significant contributions to the general programs in which he is asked to engage. On the other hand, he cannot be deprived of recognition if his contributions are marked by genuine excellence.

In recognition of merit, the initiative must almost always come from the chairman, but almost never is his the only voice. His recommendations must have the validity to persuade the dean and the president and will obviously be stronger if supported within the department. In small departments informal consultation may be enough, but in one of considerable size a formally designated group is better—this may be a committee (either elected or appointed) or simply the whole group of full professors. But even at best, a department's judgment about the achievements of one of its members may be erratic and capricious, and it is a rare college or university that does not have some machinery for the review of departmental recommendations. Commonly the dean, the provost, or the president is responsible for such reviews; but arrangements involving a faculty committee to advise the dean and president in matters of promotion are becoming increasingly popular. Such a committee may be made up of all the professors in a division, or it may involve a small group of responsible faculty members selected by the dean or president or elected by the faculty. The membership may be known to all concerned, or it may be known only to the official appointing it. The procedures required under the arrangement are cumbersome and require a great deal of time, and a committee on promotions can never take the place of discrimination and good judgment on the part of a department. Nevertheless, those institutions which have set up the procedure and which have appointed the members of the committee with care have found the arrangement an effective means of ensuring quality.

An English department maintains its excellence through vigorous recruitment of new staff and through discrimination in rewarding achievement by its own faculty; a good English department will also engage in an almost continuous examination of its curricular arrangements. It must constantly alter its offerings to better fulfill its varied missions, to accommodate the new interests of individual staff members, and to meet the challenge of new disciplines and methodologies in language and literature. At the same time it must inevitably carry a heavy burden of courses representing outmoded and often fossilized remnants of once lively inspirations. There are the courses once popular when taught by a renowned teacher, long since dead, now taught as a memorial to past greatness; there are the courses taught by senior worthies who refuse to allow changes requiring the preparation of new lectures—and such courses always seem to stand in the way of curricular improvements. In the course offerings of an English department, as in the curricula of other departments, evidences of the deadly sins of pride, covetousness, envy, and sloth are everywhere to be found. Improvement can come only through vigorous leadership and occasional villainy on the part of the chairman—or by rebellion among young faculty members.

Such conditions may exist in any department, but English departments are subject to peculiarly intense and unavoidable pressures affecting their curricular arrangements. For an English department provides a large amount of service work in freshman composition and in courses for the non-English major, and a proportionately small amount of what may be regarded as preprofessional or professional training for the English major or graduate student. Thus the larger share of the teaching work in most departments of English is concerned with the first of these undertakings; nevertheless most department members wish to do most or all of their teaching in advanced courses. Everyone likes to teach his specialty, and no one who enters the profession with a PhD lacks a specialty.

Some efforts have been made to alleviate the problem by cutting down on the number of full-time faculty members needed for the service courses. Once upon a time universities were able to employ instructors beginning their professional careers with the understanding that after a period of years the appointment would be terminated and the instructor, a more experienced and wiser man, would find another position offering better teaching opportunities. This arrangement is now rarely possible, for the demand is such that no reasonably competent young instructor needs to accept a position that fails to offer him at least a chance for permanence. A few universities have met the problem differently, by setting up two-year general colleges in which the bulk of elementary service teaching is done. Under this arrangement the faculty teaching at this level is separated from the faculty offering more advanced instruction and can less effectively present its demands for advanced courses. The operation of a general college within the framework of a large university has not, however, been generally successful; and the institution of the junior college is rapidly taking its place. Commonly English departments, to cut down on the number of instructors needed for populous freshman and sophomore courses, have resorted to large lecture courses accommodating great numbers of students—or to lecture courses supplemented by smaller quiz sections taught by graduate assistants.

Since freshman composition programs absorb the largest amount of teaching time, many efforts at solving personnel difficulties have centered on them. Some universities and colleges have even attempted to eliminate the composition requirements, but this step threatens to raise more problems than it solves. Others have taken the program out of the department of English and established it as a separate department with its own administrators and staff. But few people in the profession are willing to devote themselves and their energies to a career of teaching freshman composition; and in universities where the freshman program is the readiest means of subsidizing graduate students, the establishment of a separate department involves the loss of control by the department of English over the majority of its graduate students. Commonly, therefore, all or most of the sections of the course have been turned over to assistants who are graduate students on a part-time basis. Under this arrangement a department gains a group of enthusiastic, though often inexperienced teachers, is able to support graduate students, and secures a large amount of teaching at comparatively little cost. How completely these effects justify the arrangements may be debated, but any change in the situation seems unlikely.

The improvisations designed to cut down on the number of instructors have helped in the past, but they are scarcely adequate at the present time. Chairmen now find themselves forced to find opportunities for younger faculty members to teach advanced courses if they are to retain them. Some departments have established schemes for rotating advanced courses among members of the staff; others require that all staff members, even the most senior ones, do a proportion of their teaching in service courses. The general expansion of honors work in most departments has provided a number of challenging teaching assignments for the younger faculty; and undergraduate courses treating different literary themes, movements, or authors each time they are offered and assigned to faculty members in rotation have proved successful. Less defensible but probably more common is the practice of manufacturing courses without regard to the coherence or order of a curriculum, so that frequently the programs of representative English departments are a conglomeration of fragmented, repetitious offerings. Indeed, English departments are becoming favored whipping posts for those interested in the economics of higher education in the United States, as well as for those concerned with sound educational practices.[5]

The situation is not one with which English departments can be happy, and it is not one that can easily be improved. That faculty members do not find more satisfaction in the majority of available teaching assignments is in part a result of the present orientation of graduate training which teaches prospective instructors that only the highly technical forms of instruction are worthwhile and prestigious, that one gains neither intellectual satisfactions nor financial success nor respect from generalized teaching. The usual graduate program therefore produces specialists, not generalists; and most English departments have relatively little need for specialists. One must grant, also, that college and university administrators, who often deplore the situation of the English department, with its cluttered and expensive curricula, are ultimately responsible for the conditions they complain of. As long as they insist that most of the work of the English department be carried on by those holding PhD's, there is not much chance of improvement. As long as they reward the publishing specialist and fail to reward the kind of general service which English departments must render, members of these departments are going to pursue those paths that lead to rapid advancement—and that must inevitably produce increasing fragmentation of curricular offerings.

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[5] Richard J. Stonesifer, "Memo to a College English Department," *The Educational Record*, XLIII (1962), 317-323.

Clearly English departments will face many challenges in the next decade. Talented teachers and scholars will be in short supply; operations will multiply and become more complex; and departments must cope with the desire for "national visibility" which often seizes chairmen, deans, and presidents. Departments have not in the past been deficient in contriving ways of solving their problems, and we can guess that they will try to respond to future difficulties with resourcefulness and imagination. Nevertheless, many individual departments are going to need help. Professional and learned societies must identify some of the problems and speak out clearly and vigorously on behalf of the profession. The formal association of departmental chairmen must be supported by the entire profession. Most important of all, those departments which have taken on the responsibility for training college and university teachers will have to reexamine traditional programs in the light of the duties and obligations which the discipline must today accept. Only by such efforts is it likely that most departments will maintain high standards of instruction and scholarship and will preserve those traditions and values so necessary to humane learning.

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